

THE CORNHILL



No. 1013

Autumn, 1957

MAGAZINE

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JOHN MURRAY, 50 ALBEMARLE STREET, LONDON, W.1

At present the CORNHILL appears quarterly and will publish occasional Supplements containing work of up to 35,000 words in length.

The Editor asks that all contributions should be addressed to him at 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and accompanied by a stamped envelope.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

DESMOND NEILL has travelled and worked in the Far East, first in the Colonial Service, now in business in Singapore. His life in China is described in *Elegant Flower* (John Murray).

BETTY MILLER'S novels include *A Room in Regent's Park*, *On the Side of the Angels*, *The Death of the Nightingale* (Robert Hale). Her biographical work includes *Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Miss Mitford*, and *Robert Browning: A Portrait* (John Murray).

HELENE DUBOIS, poet, writes in the French language. This is the first appearance anywhere of this story, and the first time her work has appeared in translation in this country. Her collection of verses, *Tentation*, won the *Prix Verhaeren*, and this was followed by a further collection, *Plage*.

J. J. CURLE, editor and translator, has written verses and short stories.

LALAGE PULVERTAFT served in the W.R.N.S., took degrees at Cambridge in Archaeology, Anthropology and Egyptology. She has published two novels: *No Great Magic* and *The Thing Desired* (Secker & Warburg).

V. C. CLINTON-BADDELEY successively Don, Modern History Editor of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, actor, broadcaster, producer at the Bristol Old Vic and part-author of *Nichero*, *The Pride of the Regiment*, *Jolly Roger* (French). His books include *Words for Music* (C.U.P.), *The Burlesque Tradition in the English Theatre since 1660* (Methuen), and *All Right on the Night* (Putnam).

Trade Union Leadership

V. L. ALLEN

This book is a description and an analysis of the power of a trade union leader. It is based on a study of the late Mr. Arthur Deakin when he was the general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, but its relevance extends much beyond the limits of a single union or an individual person. It illustrates the conditions in which a trade union leader operates; it shows the forces which act on him and the scope he has for independent action. It is also an original presentation of a large amount of new material, breaking new ground in the study of industrial relations.

DAILY MAIL BOOK OF THE MONTH 30s. net

A Reed Shaken by the Wind

GAVIN MAXWELL

Gavin Maxwell, once described in *The Times* as "A man of action who writes like a poet," is an explorer at large in the world of our day, revealing facts and places previously shrouded from the general gaze. In his new book he displays the results of his personal experiences among the reed dwellers in a virtually unexplored part of the world—the marshes surrounding the lower reaches of the Tigris and covering an area which is still, in great part, marked on the official maps as 'unsurveyed.'

Book Society Recommendation

Illustrated. 21s. net

My Neighbour as Myself

GUSTAVO CORÇÃO

"Senor Gustavo Corção is a Brazilian scientist, and his book is an account of his conversion from agnosticism to Christianity . . . This is a very readable book, and that is something that cannot always be said about records of conversions."

Times Literary Supplement

16s. net

The Exilic Age

C. F. WHITLEY

Dr. Whitley describes the intellectual climate of the 6th century B.C.—including that of its Jewish exiles in Babylon—with special reference to Biblical history and theology.

16s. net

LONGMANS

First Steps in Japan

BY DESMOND NEILL

WE are the first tourist ship to arrive in Japan this year. 'Welcome to Japan,' says the tag on a bunch of celluloid cherries presented by an Immigration official. 'Welcome to Japan,' says the envelope which a Yokohama bank clerk has stuffed with yen in exchange for travellers' cheques. The strains of a military march echo from the quay side, as the Yokohama Police band strikes up its 'Welcome to Japan'. Perhaps in deference to the British flag, perhaps out of respect to the English tourists who so clearly were more intimately involved in World War I than II, the bandmaster waves his baton and ushers in the first chords of 'Roses of Picardy'.

"Rock n' Roll," yells a member of the crew, but the bandmaster knows better and switches to 'Colonel Bogey,' as Miss Yokohama dressed in a kimono of flaming gold is the first to step up the gangway with a bouquet of chrysanthemums—'Welcome to Japan' to the Captain, honourable tourists, even stewards and bell boys for we all have foreign money to spend and the Japanese want us to use it in their country; 115,000 tourists spent 25 million pounds in 1956 and this year the figure must be higher.

As I set off on my first steps in Japan, I resolve to travel alone, unaided or unescorted by a solicitous guide from the Japan Travel Bureau—their tent is already pitched at the ship's side. The real pleasure of travel—for me at least—lies in the unexpected, in strange places and chance encounters, the trifling but amusing incident; not in the charabanc with its talkative guide and the well-worn tourist sights, with stop-overs for tea and shopping where English is spoken. Language should not be too great a barrier. I still remember a few Chinese characters, which are the basis of written Japanese. But more to the point is the American occupation and gramophone records which have left the imprint of basic English on most Japanese lips.

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And then there is the fact that Japan is in Asia, and in Asia there are more languages than just Chinese or Japanese, for in the twenty-minute electric train journey from Yokohama to Tokyo, I can hear the distinguishing chatter of Malay. They are Indonesian students with scholarships to Tokyo University, who are good enough to guide me through the labyrinthine tunnels of Tokyo Central to my hotel.

I have never seen so many banks, all concentrated around my hotel—no doubt all playing their part in strengthening the Yen. "You came from Singapore? Ah!" says the hotel receptionist clerk, and bows with a particularly low bend. I am about to explain that I was not on the Siam Railroad, did not languish in Changi gaol, nor rot in the jungles of Burma and do not require the special obeisance or apologies given to those who suffer the mental scars of all that. But such things are best left unsaid.

'We apologise for embarrassment of dreadful noises in repair of bathrooms and toilets between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.' states a hotel notice on the landing. As I am to stay only two days in Tokyo, I have no time to waste in the hotel, even if undisturbed by dreadful noises. The sky outside is a cobalt blue, the air is like champagne and I feel the 'Welcome to Japan' spell is beginning to take effect.

I have been given a letter of introduction to a certain Japanese stockbroker, Mr. H., who invites me to enjoy Japan's national dish, Sukiyaki, at a Japanese restaurant—not really Japanese, because it is also a popular steakhouse and there is loud American laughter echoing from the other rooms. But the essentials are preserved, as we take off our shoes and are ushered along the smoothly planed floors, through sliding doors and sit cross-legged at a small square table on springy straw mattresses, called *tatami*. The maid—not a qualified geisha—in kimono and obi, bows and kneels at our side to prepare the food. The obi is a beautifully embroidered brocade, about nine inches wide, and wound round her waist. I also learn that it is fastened at the back with a large metal clip and supported by a small pillow.

"And you must be Englishman," she replies, tugging at my waistcoat.

Mr. H. makes delicate enquiries about what the people of Singapore

think of Japan. "At school before the war," he explains, "I was taught to die for Japan."

"And now?" I enquire. "You are taught to make Japan a strong country industrially, and strengthen the Yen."

"Ha! Ha! you are a clever man."

"Not clever—it's only too obvious after two days in Tokyo."

"You like saké, Japanese national wine from rice, no?"

I nod my head in vigorous assent.

"No?"

"Yes." I cannot remember the exact exchange of negatives and affirmatives, coupled with the nods and shakes which, in Japan, appear not to conform with Western understanding, but it is at last made clear that I would relish some saké, which is produced, piping hot, and poured into small porcelain cups. Meanwhile the Sukiyaki is prepared—first the lump of fat into the brazier at the centre of the table, followed by thin strips of beef, French onions, spring onions, bamboo shoots, dried mushrooms, gelatine and topped by a liberal splash of sweet brown sauce. Fresh eggs are beaten in our rice bowls while the brazier sizzles, and we nibble at Japanese *hors d'œuvres* with wooden chopsticks. The maid now helps us to the Sukiyaki pieces which are first dipped into the raw egg, and then quickly despatched with the aid of saké. The meal is capped with a cup of green tea and an orange.

Mr. H. suddenly decides to lie down, his head next to the large porcelain bowl filled with straw ashes and the warming embers of burning charcoal.

"Please excuse, very sorry, no condition, I stinko," he says in a staccato of Americanisms.

"Japanese custom?" I ask the maid.

"Maybe," she replies, clearing the table and vigorously wiping my trousers, covered in grease spots that have fallen in unexpected places.

Mr. H. suddenly comes to life as quickly as he had collapsed.

"Condition better," he says with a smile. "Now for night life and cabarets."

The journey to Odawara, from where I catch a bus to the Fujiya Hotel, is nearly two hours. The countryside is still clothed in the drabness of late winter, and I can understand the scenic advantage of

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arriving in April for the cherry blossom. But as compensation, there are the oranges which glow like fire balls in their oily green foliage. Japanese houses seem uniform, dull grey wooden structures. I have yet to see a house which might belong to a millionaire.

It is half an hour's climb by bus into the hills from Odawara Station to Fujiya Hotel. The bus conductress, who has been practising her English, enquires as I descend, "Japanese drivers no good, yes?" I think quickly.

"No."

"Thank you," she says. I am making progress.

The hotel is a judicious mixture of Western and Japanese architecture. In one wing, there are the Cherry, Chrysanthemum, Peach, Plum and other flowery rooms. But they cost seven pounds a night, and I have to be content with one distinguished by a plain numeral. Opposite is the Roman Aquarium hot bath, and elsewhere the bath of Perpetual Youth, the Dream Pool, the Mermaid room and, something so ordinary as the Green bath.

A picture frame of eminent personalities, who have stayed here, hangs outside my room—Fritz Kreisler, Amy Mollison, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. It is a pre-war collection, visitors were more selective in those days. With the advent of notices a few miles away like 'U.S. Army Rest Centre, Officer Category,' the sting of originality and aristocratic leisure has been taken out of tourism.

The hotel manager advises me to take a taxi to Lake Hakone. Mt. Fuji is best viewed from there, provided Nature is not so unkind and jealous as to wrap her favourite child in a blanket of clouds and mist. We keep winding up into the mountains, higher and higher, with snow flakes beginning to fall and leaving a mantle of white on the pine trees; later we descend to Lake Hakone with the driver sadly shaking his head. Then suddenly a shout of "FUJI!", and he brings the car to a screeching halt. We both rush out and he points, excitedly and then with inner contentment, to the vague outline of white slopes caught by the setting sun as it tries to penetrate the milky grey mist. Perhaps it will be clearer tomorrow.

This evening there is Sukiyaki in the Japanese annexe, once a favourite resting place of the old Imperial household. It is served with great

decorum, and the rooms are well appointed with small Japanese side-boards, mirrors, a bowl of chrysanthemums and a hanging scroll of Fuji. I am not required to sit cross-legged, but with a blanket over my legs which can be stretched into a pit under the table, heated by a charcoal burner. The maid is in the best tradition of a Japanese beauty, and dressed in a finely worked green kimono. I have heard it said that Japan is a man's country, and tonight's service confirms me in this view.

A slight commotion occurs the next morning. I have lost my front collar stud.

"Stud?" I ask the room maid. Soon the hotel manager is ringing through. "You want what?"

"A stud for my shirt."

"You mean button?"

"No, a stud. Perhaps the hotel shop has one."

"Yes, please try." But detached collars and studs appear to be a peculiarly English convention, and at the hotel and all other village shops I am greeted with "Please excuse, so sorry." There is nothing else, I decide, but to organise a thorough search of my room. But I have underrated Japanese service, and can sense from smiles at the hotel desk that this has successfully been done during my wild shopping chase.

The train journey from Odawara to my next stop, Kyoto, skirts Mt. Fuji and takes seven hours. The Japan Tourist Bureau has bought me a ticket, or rather two tickets, one for basic fare and the other extra for second class. I am still very confused; there are first class carriages which I have never seen. Everyone advises me against them. Then there is second class special. I am advised against this too, but inadvertently take a seat there. The carriage is almost empty, but very comfortable, and I wonder how much more comfortable and expensive is first class. There seem to be as many gadgets under my seat as taps in a Japanese bathroom. I press the correct knob, and slide back into the lap of comfort. Soon a little man in a peaked cap and red arm band, is asking for my ticket. He emits a smothered noise, breaks out in a flood of Japanese, follows this up with "So sorry! So sorry!" and repeatedly points his finger down the train. The excited train attendant ushers me into the second class and

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I feel I am losing a lot of face carrying my bags down the central corridor, after my obvious expulsion from the special carriage. I am asked to sit by an elderly Japanese with sparse and greying hair. His cheeks are a little sunken, but he has the eyes of a young person—intelligent, clear and sandy coloured. It is only a matter of minutes before we are in conversation, and I learn his name is Mr. Nagasaki. We begin modestly—he is an engineer in a steelworks and I am a tourist on my way to catch a ship.

"You wear English-style suit. English?"

"No, Irish."

"Ha! We Japanese like English and specially Irish." I feel sure the tune can be changed to suit the company.

"What you do Tokyo?" My experience of elderly Chinese is they delight in hearing about a rake's progress, and spicy details of the shady adventures of foreigners. I presume it is the same in Japan.

"Ha! The American influence. Night clubs and modern dancing."

"But the Japanese have a tradition in that line. What about geishas?"

"Geisha honourable profession. There is special school for geishas, and training too for musical instruments. Government recognises geisha. There is geisha tax. Which places you go . . . ?"

I am right about my presumptions.

On the other side of the train there is an elderly missionary talking to a young couple. Shining new suitcases and American President Line tags suggest they have just arrived. The elder man's voice can be heard ringing through the train—"Holy Communion . . . Cathedral . . ."

"Very good talker, that American, yes? Ha! ha! Let us drink beer in refreshment car."

"Let us," I reply. We are soon sitting down to two large bottles of Asahi beer.

"You come from where?"

"Singapore."

"Oh . . . Ha! ha! Yes . . . And what do you do there?"

"In the Government."

Desmond Neill

"You were at Oxford or Cambridge?"

"A short time at Oxford."

"Then you must be a big official."

"No, a very small one."

"You do what?"

"I deal with strikes and disputes between employers and their workers."

"Our steel mill many hundreds of workers, but never any strike. Ha! ha! How long you been Singapore?"

"After the war." I can sense a sudden relaxation.

We are now passing a small Japanese seaside town. It is a brilliantly clear day and the sea sparkles like diamonds set in a carpet of turquoise blue.

"That is Atami. We Japanese call it our Monaco."

The ding-dong notes of a gong are recorded over the train's public communication system. A Japanese announcement is made.

"Telegram for passenger," says Mr. N.

"Business telegram, no doubt." I add: "Japanese are very keen on business now."

"Ha! ha! Thank you." We sit in silence for a while, and this is broken by Mr. N. shouting.

"Look! Mt. Fuji!"

The revered Goddess has come into view, and all eyes and cameras are now in her direction. There is not a wisp of cloud in the indigo sky, and her smooth curving slopes stand out with the precision of a draftsman's compass. That side of her white mantle facing the East is beginning to shorten under the dissolving rays of the sun.

"You see Fuji. So gracious, so beauty! Such splendid slope." Mr. N. ecstatically sucks his teeth and waves his hand in an upward circle.

"And those pine trees, look! They are Japan's national tree, just like chrysanthemum is Japan's national flower."

We stop at a station, and Mr. N. continues:

"This is where our young men come in summer to climb Fuji. So strenuous, so hard to get to the top."

"In summer, not in the spring?"

"Ah! In spring, there is the cherry blossom. We are so happy

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and we take picnic and drink saké and just watch the cherry blossoms. It is our national flower."

"I thought chrysanthemums were."

"Ah! Chrysanthemum is emblem of the Emperor, but the people like cherry blossom."

"Then the cherry blossom is the symbol of democracy."

"Ha! ha! Yes! Cherry blossom is the symbol of democracy. Very good! Very clever you!"

The weather has changed with great suddenness and it is beginning to snow. Soon the countryside is blanketed in white.

"No trade winds here," explains Mr. N. "Shall we take food? You like steak or Japanese food?"

"Steak please, and you?" I ask, twiddling a table vase with two sweet peas.

"Japanese food, please excuse." His chopsticks are of the coarse wooden variety, to be thrown away at the end of the meal.

"Cigarette?" asks Mr. N., offering me one from his packet—the Peace brand. There is a white dove on the cover, but not the Picasso design.

"Ha! ha! We Japanese love peace now," he says, pointing to the dove. "Do you know Iron and Steel Institute in your country?"

"No. Please excuse."

"Before the war, they published my thesis on tempering steel, and then, ha! ha!, I was given doctorate by Japanese University."

"Congratulations! Have you been to England?"

"No. So sorry. I have never left Japan."

"You must be a big name in Japan's steel industry."

"I am on National Committee for Steel Production. Last year Japan was fourth in world supplies. America, Russia, England and then Japan. This year we try to be third. Ha! ha! So sorry! Last year Japan was first in the world for new shipping. Before that, England. So sorry! So sorry!"

"Perhaps you will soon lead the world for steel production also."

"Ha! ha! Maybe! Maybe!"

"I very much regret I have not the time to visit your big Industrial centres, and find out how the workers feel about the new Japan. What about Communism?"

Desmond Neill

"Japanese don't like Communism. We like Freedom. Business is now good, and people are happier. Plenty orders for Japan after Suez was closed."

"But I've read about big Communist demonstrations in Japan."

"Small number only. Some students and Government officials. Many Government officers are Communist—too little pay and too much time to think about it. Ha ! ha ! So sorry, you are Government officer too."

"English Government officers are supposed to drink tea and gossip, not discuss Marx."

"Ha ! ha ! Very good."

Mr. N. goes back to his seat and I continue to contemplate the blizzard from the overheated refreshment coach, drinking more Asahi. Several American Air Force sergeants have ordered ham and eggs, and some Japanese University students have come in from the draughty third class carriage to get warm. But there is a premium to pay and they have to order something—black coffee, it is the cheapest item of the menu.

It is already dark, and we are now approaching Kyoto. I go back to collect my bags, and Mr. N. hands me his card.

"So sorry ! I am going on to Kobe to see my grandchildren. Please ! My card." On the back is written, 'I hope your best journey in Japan and happy return to your home, Kyoto Station,' and it is signed by Mr. N., Managing Director of a steel mill, which I later learn is one of the biggest in Japan.

Mr. N. has recommended me a restaurant and a Japanese style hotel in Kyoto, where I am greeted with a flourish. The manager and all the maids rush to the lobby, as the small courtyard gate is opened and the bell attached to the gate automatically rings.

"Ah ! You like Japanese hotel ?" says one of the maids, helping to take off my shoes and grabbing my belongings. There is considerable bowing and form-signing at the desk and then, "This way please." I shuffle along in straw sandals, carefully minding not to knock my head where the steps go up and the ceiling remains level. My room is freezing, and the small charcoal fire in the porcelain pot is quite ineffective.

"Never mind. Bed very warm. Plenty blankets," says my room

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maid, who is joined by two others, all dressed in red kimonos. I look round the room ; small sliding cabinets, chrysanthemums and sprigs in a flat vase, a low dressing table with mirror—I shall have to sit cross-legged even to comb my hair—a Japanese miniature garden in front, with an electric bulb concealed in a tree, so that through the curtains it looks like everlasting moonlight. And in the far corner, a wash-basin with hermetically sealed toothbrushes, eight in fact.

I am shivering and ask for a bath.

"You like Japanese hot bath?" asks one of the maids.

"Yes. I also like Japanese rumba aye, aye, aye." There are shrieks of laughter at this, followed by much comment in Japanese among themselves. One of them goes out and brings back a kimono.

The hotel manager, careful to avoid an embarrassing intrusion, knocks politely, and enquires. "You want a bath? I will call bath boy." The bath boy, taking no chances, shouts from outside, "Bath O.K."

"Japanese go bath in kimono. Come!" says my maid.

I look at the kimono and the three maids, and am not sure what is to be my next move. I remove my coat which is quickly taken.

"Ah! You Englishman, No?" and all three tug at my waistcoat. Then my waistcoat, then my shoes, socks . . . there is a lot of Japanese chatter. And now my stud, carefully placed in a sliding cabinet, my shirt, my trousers and now only my underclothes to go. One of the maids takes up the kimono for me to slip into, but obviously not yet. So I am reduced to my birthday suit, more naked than nude by Sir Kenneth Clark's standards, and led away in triumph.

As I go out in search of Mr. N.'s restaurant, my room maid says, "Tonight you leave money hotel desk, yes?"

"Why?"

"Japanese style, because Japanese robbers. Ha! ha!"

I look for the scrap of paper on which I have written the name of the restaurant. It seems to be missing from my pocket. It was something like Yamagoyo.

"Yamagoyo restaurant," I tell the taxi driver. He nods his head confidently, but keeps muttering to himself, "Yamagoyo, गया . . .

goya . . . Ah ! goyo," and speeds off into the heart of Kyoto. We seem to be moving in concentric circles in and out of quiet side streets and down the main boulevard bathed in coloured neon lights.

"Yamagoyo restaurant ! You know ?"

"Yeah ! Sure, I know. Yamago . . . ga . . . go . . . ga". Suddenly we stop in front of a fruit shop, where a fat old Japanese is dusting his display of apples, oranges and enormous strawberries, intermittently pointing in this direction and then that. The driver comes trotting back, hunched with the cold and rubbing his hands.

"Ah ! Yamagoya !" he mutters to himself, and then to me, "I know you want !" The taxi meter has now touched 500 Yen, and we start crawling down a side street. A large-sized Japanese woman is sitting at each doorway. "Yamagoya ?" shouts the driver to one. She points her pudgy fingers across the road.

I am beginning to have serious doubts about the destination ; Yamagoya, maybe, but not a restaurant.

A stout Japanese lady, in an oversize yellow kimono and with several chins, breaks into a broad smile, as she ambles up to the taxi.

"Hello ! You G.I ? You nice !"

"Yamagoya !" says the driver.

"Wrong one," I explain. "Please back to main street."

"Hey ! hey ! What you want ? Come back," shouts the petulant lady, but it's too late. I decide to try a second taxi. He is a younger driver, and seems more confident. But my suspicions are soon aroused, for we seem to be going around in the same circles.

"Yamagoya restaurant. Straight, please."

"Sure ! Straight," he replies and then stops outside a taxi garage, and rushes into the office. I can see some excited talk through the glass windows. Telephone directories, and street maps are produced. Finally he comes rushing out with a knowing look in his eye.

"Ah ! Yamagoya. Sure, straight !" We are proceeding along a familiar street, and I see something I have seen before, a stout lady in yellow. We stop and she begins to amble over with an even bigger smile on her face.

"Yamagoya !" says the driver.

"Wrong place. Take me night club, coffee house, anywhere I can eat."

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"Hey! You nice! What you want . . . ?" there is an exchange in Japanese with the driver, and we lurch forward with the Ma Ma San raising her fist and giving me a look that could kill. I wish I knew enough Japanese to explain.

The driver decides that nothing less than the Kyoto Hotel will satisfy me. Warner Brothers are much in evidence, large American limousines with WB flags, shooting schedules, pay instructions to local employees, and a steady influx of tired technicians and actors streaming through the swing doors. Marlon Brando is back in Japan as a plain G.I., having discarded his Okinawan disguise.

The pangs of hunger assuaged, I decide to explore the honeycomb of bars, cabarets and all else in 'down-town' Kyoto. The bars are cosy and intimately appointed with a Japanese proprietress, Ma Ma San, usually in charge. The same artistry which is applied to miniature gardens seems to have been used in decorating the bars. They are small, with narrow ceilings, and space for about ten seats around the counter. The decorative leitmotiv follows the name of the bar. At 'The Horse,' White Horse whisky is sold. The lighting is concealed, nothing obviously protrudes but on glancing around the walls, I can see a lucky horseshoe, a Chinese Tang horse, Pat Smythe taking a jump, Nashua winning a race and a John Peel hunting scene.

This bar is owned by a charming Japanese couple who remind me of their counterparts of a small pub in the middle of Oxfordshire: quiet conversation, gentle gossip, personal attention and a natural bonhomie with their fellowmen. It is here that I am introduced to a leading obi manufacturer, who is anxious to show me Kyoto tomorrow in his English car.

"Capital of Japan moved to Tokyo from Kyoto about eighty years ago," explains the obi magnate next morning as we drive past temples, shrines and palaces in his second-hand Austin. It is actually not he who directly explains, but his friend, a car dealer—hence the Austin—who was once at Peking University where he learnt English. There are two small vases in the car, each with a red tulip.

We have now reached the Imperial Palace Gardens, where Warner Brothers are shooting 'Sayonara.'

"Shall we see the film set," I suggest.

Desmond Neill

"Maybe *you* can see, but not us," says the car dealer.

The Gardens seem an endless expanse of wide gravelled paths and pine trees. An attendant points in the direction of a walled-in space—a garden within a garden. As we approach, the big wooden gates automatically open and shut to allow in a green limousine with its WB flag fluttering in the breeze. The obi magnate and his friend approach a young Japanese watchman. I have no idea what is being said, or who I am said to be. The watchman turns to me.

"You not Warner Brothers, yes?"

"No."

"You like badge, yes?"

"Yes."

"O.K. Here badge."

"Very pretty badge," a remark which sends the watchman into howls of laughter.

"I come too, O.K.?"

"O.K.," so we both proceed through the pine trees, past the temporary canteen, W.C. tents and recording vans until we reach a small lake. It is spanned by a bridge, with Marlon Brando surrounded by more than a hundred Japanese girls dressed in pink and blue kimonos, a man shouting directions through a megaphone, then suddenly . . .

"Are you with us?" I have a certain feeling that this must be directed towards me. I have no doubt in the matter now, as an oversized American comes towering towards me. The watchman is chattering excitedly in Japanese with a small crowd. The second echelon of chuckers-out, officious looking English-speaking Japanese, come crowding in. "How did you get in here? Who gave you that?" My only concern is the watchman and his job.

"There is a misunderstanding. It is all my fault. I am a tourist." One of the second echelon actually grabs me by the arm. I am about to declare I am a British subject, will not be manhandled by any foreigner, demand to see the extra-territorial rights of an American Film Company in the Imperial Palace Gardens, but no . . . I open my coat, display my waistcoat, hand back the badge and walk slowly away. This produces another paroxysm of laughter in the watchman, who whispers in my ear, "English very gentleman!"

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It is a slow but dignified procession that winds its way back to the entrance. Never must the obi magnate know I was chucked out in a hurry.

Back in the Kyoto hotel, my illusion about being the sole tourist on his first steps in Japan is shattered on seeing the distinguished old lady, who sits at the far end of the ship's dining saloon, sweep through the hotel lobby with her husband. She is wearing a silver fox fur and is carrying lorgnettes.

"Mr. Neill! Coo-ee! What *do* you think of Japan?" I cannot remember so much as a smile from her on the journey from Singapore. But now, on foreign soil, we are expected to greet each other with the enthusiasm of G.B. motorists giving mutual horn signals on the continent.

"Why! I haven't seen you for days, what *have* you been up to? We were asking about you on board, weren't we, dear? But they said you had gone ashore. Up to no mischief, I hope."

"Oh no. . . ."

"But I'm so disappointed at the houses. In Penang and Hong Kong we saw *lovely* houses, didn't we, dear. All those wealthy Chinese, such nice taste."

"Not all. . . ."

"I'm so glad we didn't buy our souvenirs in Tokyo. The shops here are much less crowded and cheaper. There's a lovely one near the station."

"Pukka gen?"

"No, that's not the name. What was it called, dear? Here's their card."

"Thank you."

"But we shan't be sorry to be on our way back, shall we, dear? Now, let me see, where did you get on? Colombo, was it?"

"No, Singapore."

"Oh, yes! Well! I knew it was at *one* of the Colonies. We simply loved Singapore, Raffles Hotel, isn't it? And as for Colombo, quite divine." Through the swing doors strides a fellow passenger, a retired admiral, who is more deserving of her attention, and I am able to escape.

Kobe is one hour by train, and our ship sails at dawn tomorrow.

Desmond Neill

There are last-minute purchases to be made—the old lady is right, Kyoto is cheaper than Tokyo. It is now dark, so I decide not to break the journey at Osaka. At last I have time to make a few notes in the train. A University student and a businessman sit opposite. The student is peeping across at my note-book and has opened up his English dictionary. The businessman is looking at the labels on my baggage. I take out a cigarette, and feel for a match in my pocket. I have in fact about twenty boxes, advertisement matches from shops, hotels, restaurants and bars. The businessman leans forward to offer a light.

"Please excuse. Japanese lighters very poor." We are soon in conversation.

"I had a business in Manila before the war. Now no more, bankrupt. I was ten months in the Army. Enough for me. I don't want another war."

The student says he is studying jurisprudence at Kyoto University. "I want to be a diplomat and go to England. You have a great tradition. I like countries with tradition."

I say I am Irish.

"Ah! Ireland has a great tradition too."

I am told it is difficult to join Japan's diplomatic service, and much depends on the University you have entered. I am also informed many Japanese students work their way through college, are victims of T.B., and are against British hydrogen tests in the Pacific. There is much more he would like to have told me about Japan and the Japanese, about their politics, literature, poetry, ceremonies, customs, the over-population problem, their attitude towards the West, Communism, but time is drawing to a close. And at Osaka, a team of ice hockey players board the train. They are in very high spirits, laughing and behaving very much like an English college XV. With English limited to such stock phrases as "You like Japanese girls?" they obviously do not share similar ambitions about the diplomatic corps. But they are equally representative of the youth of Japan, young men who twenty years ago were told they should die for their country and today are being moulded into the pattern of a new democracy. Will it be democracy as we know it? Will Mr. N. prove right? After five days I am brash enough to think he will, for

First Steps in Japan

although political parties have yet to be clearly defined and loyalties properly focused, nowhere have I seen or sensed the frustration and disillusionment which in 1949 handed China over to the Communists.

On more than one occasion, I have tried to reconcile the artistry and gentle politeness, so evident to the newcomer in Japan, with the stories of brutality and savagery recounted by those who suffered in Bataan, Singapore and the Burmese jungle. It is an enigma that to me remains unresolved. Please excuse ; maybe a longer sojourn might explain.

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The Séance at Ealing

A Study in Memory and Imagination

BY BETTY MILLER

ONE evening, late in July, 1855, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Browning, who had recently arrived in London from Italy, drove out to Ealing to meet a young man called Daniel Dunglas Home. Home, too, had recently arrived in London. His reputation, however, had preceded him. No sooner was he installed at Cox's Hotel, in Jermyn Street, than he found titled women vying with one another for the privilege of offering him hospitality. Before very long, the powers of the young American medium were the talk of the town. It was to escape for a time from the stress of London society that Home had retired to the rural calm of Ealing, where he lived quietly in the house of a wealthy solicitor called John Rymer. And it was here, in the midst of this tranquil family atmosphere, in a house whose french windows opened onto green lawns and leafy trees, that Robert Browning saw for the first time the man who was to inspire in him a notorious and all-absorbing enmity.

The poet recorded his impressions of Home while they were still fresh.

'Mr. H. [he wrote] says that he is "twenty," but very properly adds, that he looks much older—he declares that he has "no strength at all" . . . and affects the manners, endearments and other peculiarities of a very little child indeed—speaking of Mr. and Mrs. Rymer as his "Papa and Mama," and kissing the family abundantly—he professes timorousness, "a love of love"—and is

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unpleasant enough in it all—being a well-grown young man of over the average height, and, I should say, of quite the ordinary bodily strength—his face is rather handsome and prepossessing, and indicative of intelligence,—and I observed nothing offensive or pretentious in his demeanour beyond the unmanlinesses I mention, which are in the worst taste.’

Already, it will be seen, an obscure but very patent resentment mingles with the overt attempt to be objective and fair; a conflict no less evident in the description of the séance which Browning wrote on his return to Dorset Street. This account is contained in a letter written to a Mrs. Kinney, an American friend who had privately asked Robert Browning for a frank impression of Home and his ‘manifestations.’ It is an important letter, not only because it gives a detailed account of what actually took place at the famous séance, but also because it is the only document which has, unmistakably, the sense of immediacy upon it. This letter—it is now in the library of Yale University—was dashed off, rapidly and impatiently, less than forty-eight hours after the Brownings’ return from Ealing. It is perhaps the longest letter that the poet ever wrote. In it, he describes, in detail, the items in Daniel Home’s occult repertoire, and records his own reaction to the spectacle.

Very soon after the famous séance began, Robert Browning saw two manifestations which surprised and puzzled him. The first of these was the sudden up-rearing of the table, during which time the table-cloth, the ornaments, and a heavy lamp all remained in their places, unaffected by the commotion. ‘I don’t know at all,’ Browning confessed, ‘how the thing was done.’ A little later, something else—trivial, but no less inexplicable—disturbed him: at one moment, he saw Elizabeth’s dress, near the waist, ‘slightly but distinctly uplifted in a manner I cannot account for—as if by some object inside—which could hardly have been introduced without her becoming aware of it. This,’ he added, ‘was repeated’: it remained, none the less, inexplicable. Nor was he able to understand the mechanism whereby a hand, as he said, ‘appeared from the edge of the table, opposite to my wife and myself; was withdrawn, reappeared and moved about, rose and sank—it was clothed in white loose folds, like

muslin, down to the table's edge—from which it was never separated—then another hand, larger, appeared, pushed a wreath, or pulled it, off the table, picked it from the ground, brought it to my wife . . . and put it on her head.' (When this celebrated episode was later described by Home in the *Spiritualist Magazine*, shortly after the publication of *Mr. Sludge, the Medium*, Home added: 'Mr. Browning seemed much disappointed that the wreath was not put upon his own head instead of his wife's'—a remark which caused G. K. Chesterton to add that the idea of Robert Browning 'running about the room after a wreath in the hope of putting his head into it, is one of the genuine gleams of humour in this foolish affair.')

Although they offered him no wreath, Browning was not, however, wholly neglected by the spirits on this occasion. He found himself, as he said, 'touched several times under the table on one knee and the other,—and on my hands alternately' by what he describes, disquietingly, as 'a kind of soft and fleshy pat.' Soon after this, at the suggestion of the spirits, there was an interval in the proceedings. A quarter of an hour elapsed, and the guests returned to the room. The spirits now engaged (assisted, as they sensibly explained, by four strong spirits) to lift the table so that the poet could see the process for himself. There was light in the room, according to Browning; and by this light he was allowed to make his own investigations, unimpeded. The fact is put on record. 'I looked under the table,' Browning wrote, 'and can aver that it was lifted from the ground, say a foot high, more than once—Mr. Home's hands being plainly above it.'

After describing other phenomena—which included the mysterious playing of an accordion by invisible hands—Browning summed up his impressions. He was honest enough to add, in conclusion: 'I don't in the least pretend to explain how the table was *uplifted altogether* . . . and how my wife's gown was agitated—nor how the accordion was played.' Throughout the séance, indeed, despite his own growing hostility, he was at pains to behave with overt decorum—to comply with his host's instructions that the guests should put no questions to the spirits, nor desire to see anything other than what the spirits might please to show them. 'I treated "the spirits";' Browning wrote, 'with the forms and courtesies observed by the others, and in no

The Séance at Ealing

respect impeded the "development" by expressing the least symptom of unbelief.'

This, then, is Browning's account of the affair, fresh from the happenings themselves, and before hostility to Home had hardened, and become organised. 'I dare say,' the poet added in conclusion, 'my wife will give you her own account which differs from mine in all respects; so are we constituted.' Elizabeth's account, addressed, not to Mrs. Kinney, but to her sister Henrietta, in Taunton, not only differed in all respects from Browning's, it was written nearly a month later. She, too, describes the music, the raps, the lifting of the table, the spirit hands, and the placing of the wreath on her brow. 'For my own part,' she wrote, 'I am confirmed in all my opinions. To me, it was wonderful and conclusive; and I believe that the medium present was no more *responsible* for the things said and done, than I myself was.'

The division between husband and wife on the subject of spiritualism was now, less than a month after the séance, total. This schism is confirmed by the existence of two letters, one from Robert, the other from Elizabeth, written on the same day, and despatched in the same envelope. The letters were sent to a Miss de Gaudrian, who had written to ask the couple's opinion of the 'spiritual manifestations' seen at Ealing. Elizabeth's reply repeats word for word the belief in Home's integrity which she had already expressed to her sister. Browning's imperious note, written in the third person, reveals, not only how deep the rift had become between husband and wife, but how far Browning himself had travelled from his own early, and comparatively unprejudiced impressions of the séance. Despite the formality of the note, the tone is so brusque and emotional, that it is difficult not to believe that Browning was addressing, not Miss de Gaudrian alone, but also that obstinate, deluded and beloved woman, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, his wife.

Here are some extracts from this curious letter.

'Mr. Browning did, in company with his wife, witness Mr. Home's performances at Ealing on the night Miss de Gaudrian alludes to—and he is hardly able to account for the fact that there can be another opinion than his own on the matter—that being that the

Betty Miller

whole display of "hands," "spirit-utterances" etc. were a cheat and imposture. Mr. Browning believes in the sincerity and good faith of the Rymer family, and regrets proportionately that benevolent and worthy people should be subjected to the consequences of those admirable qualities of benevolence and worth when unaccompanied by a grain of worldly wisdom. . . . Mr. Browning has, however, abundant experience that the best and rarest of natures may begin by the proper mistrust of the more ordinary results of reasoning when employed in such investigations as these ; go on to an abnegation of the regular tests of truth and rationality in favour of these particular experiments, and end in a voluntary prostration of the whole intelligence before what is assumed to transcend all intelligence. Once arrived at this point, no trick is too gross . . . Mr. Browning . . . recommends leaving this business to its natural termination, and will console himself for any pain to the dupes by supposing that their eventual profit in improved intelligence would be no otherwise procurable.'

It is a far cry from the wary, but tolerant attitude of the first letter, and reveals how acute the conflict had become between July 23, when the séance took place, and August 30, when this second letter was written. This conflict was to envenom, for Browning, the whole subject of the occult : it continued to do so for the rest of his life. The antipathy to spiritualism requires no apology. Browning's attitude to Home is manifestly more complex. Home was young enough to be his son : that fact alone seems to have aroused an initial and inexplicable resentment. He was a charlatan, he believed ; and a charlatan, moreover, who effortlessly, in a single evening, had won the enduring admiration and allegiance of Elizabeth Browning. The ascendancy thus gained, Robert found, was unshakable : however fiercely, in the years to come, he might strive, as he put it, ' with the utmost of my soul's strength ' to wean Elizabeth from Home, he was unable to do so. Home lurked, thereafter, a silent but omnipresent shadow on the domestic hearth—as, no doubt, the writer in the *Spiritualist Magazine* suspected, when, after the publication of *Mr. Sludge*, he sweetly enquired : ' What can poor Sludge have done to the poet, for . . . the poet must surely have some personal injury to resent ? '

The Séance at Ealing

Personal injury there indeed was : nor can there be any doubt that it was the knowledge of this intimate failure which finally inflamed Browning's hostility to the medium, and which later led him, where Home was concerned, into that very 'abnegation of the regular tests of truth and rationality' which he had once so loudly deplored in the admirers of Home himself.

A year later, after what was to be, for Elizabeth, her last visit to England, the Brownings returned to Florence. There, they were visited one summer evening in 1858 by Nathaniel Hawthorne and his wife. 'There was a conversation about spirits,' Mrs. Hawthorne afterwards wrote, 'and a marvellous story was told of two hands that crowned Mrs. Browning with a wreath through the mediumship of Mr. Home. Mr. Browning declared that he believed the two hands were made by Home and fastened to Mr. Home's toes, and that he made them move by moving his feet.' It is possible that this was indeed the case : but Browning saw no evidence of the fact at Ealing. The trick, nevertheless, is foisted upon Sludge, who, with his 'lithe' young limbs, is able effectively, not only to 'play the glove At end o' your slipper,' but 'to turn, shove, tilt a table. . .' Conveniently, it seems, Browning had forgotten the fact that he had once looked under a table, and seen it rise from the ground, unassisted by human hand or foot.

In June, 1861, Elizabeth Barrett Browning died. Very soon after, Robert left Florence, and with his son, Pen, returned to England. He took a house in Warwick Crescent, overlooking the canal, his home for the next twenty-five years, and there he finished correcting the proofs of a new volume of poems. Conspicuous amongst these, was a poem in blank verse, called *Mr. Sludge, the Medium*. The book, *Dramatis Personae*, was published on May 26, 1864. A few weeks later, the poet William Allingham called on Robert Browning at Warwick Crescent. As was his habit, Allingham recorded the ensuing conversation in his diary. 'Sludge is Home the Medium,' he wrote, 'of whom Browning told me to-day a good deal that was very amusing. Having witnessed a séance of Home's, at the house of a friend of Browning's, Browning was openly called upon to give his frank opinion of what had passed, in presence of Home and the company, upon which, he declared with emphasis that so impudent a piece

Betty Miller

of imposture he never saw before in all his life, and so took his leave.

Out of context, a verse of Browning's springs to mind.

Oh, Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find !

I can hardly misconceive you, it would prove me deaf and blind ;
But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind !

A heavy mind, indeed ; for we have Browning's written word for it, not only that he was allowed, freely, at one point, to make his own investigations, but that he ' in no respect impeded the " development " by expressing the least symptom of unbelief.' Admittedly, nine years had elapsed since the disastrous doings at Ealing : Browning's memory may have become a trifle blurred, and Allingham himself unwittingly, perhaps, contributed to the distortion. However strong his hatred of Home, Browning, needless to say, would not knowingly have told a lie. What had happened is that, by an emotional sleight-of-hand which successfully deceived its own author, the wish had finally been permitted to become father to the thought.

In 1889, Robert Browning died in Venice. Thirteen years later, Frank Podmore published a book called *Modern Spiritualism*. In this, he stated that Browning had personally explained to F. W. Myers, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, that he had never detected Home cheating, and that the only definite evidence he could show for his opinion that Home was an impostor was based on a second-hand rumour that Home was once caught in Italy experimenting with phosphorus. A reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* quoted that statement. He compared it with the words of—I quote—'an eminent living writer who has assured the world in print that Mr. Browning distinctly informed him that he did catch Home out in a vulgar fraud. What,' added the reviewer, 'can anyone make of such evidence?' What indeed? But there was more to come. A week later, on December 5, 1902, a letter from Pen Browning appeared in the same journal. The little Penini of Casa Guidi days, whom Hawthorne described as 'so slender, fragile and spirit-like . . . as if he had nothing to do with human flesh and blood,' was now, in his fifties, a tubby man with a bald head and a round beef-red face, very fond of the company of women and horses. Pen's main intention

The Séance at Ealing

in writing, he asserted, was to defend his mother by insisting that, before the end of her life, her views on spiritualism had been sensibly modified. In the act of defending his mother, however, he gave a sharp, inadvertent knock to the reputation of his father. 'Mr. Hume,' he wrote, 'who subsequently changed his name to Home, was detected "in a vulgar fraud," for I have heard my father repeatedly describe how he caught hold of his foot under the table.'

Note : repeatedly. The wheel has come full circle : fantasy is now inextricably confounded with fact. For that it is fantasy and not fact, Browning's own words abundantly prove. On no other occasion, moreover, save on July 23, 1855, did Browning and Home meet face to face at a séance. Nor can there be any doubt that if Browning had indeed caught Home in the act of cheating, he would triumphantly have proclaimed the fact in his letters to Mrs. Kinney and Miss de Gaudrian alike. He did not do so, because nothing of the sort took place. But resentment continued sullenly to smoulder over the years, bursting, on one notable occasion, into overt conflagration, when, weary of the sight of Home's dusty spirit-wreath hanging still, on his wife's dressing-table, Robert Browning seized it and flung it out of the window, a gesture that simultaneously relieved his feelings and cleared the way for the writing of *Mr. Sludge, the Medium*. This long and acrid poem was composed during the last years of Elizabeth's life and never shown to her. At the close of it, Sludge, exposed and humiliated, tries to salve his own vanity by deciding how best to tell the story to his own ultimate advantage.

You're satisfied at last ? You've found out Sludge ?

We'll see that presently : my turn, sir, next !

I, too, can tell my story . . .

I, too, can tell my story . . . Who is speaking—Mr. Sludge, the Medium—or Robert Browning ?

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Summer's Lease

BY HELENE DUBOIS

Translated by J. J. Curle

MY name is Madeleine Rozier. At the time of which I write people called me Maddie, and I was seventeen.

One June evening I was hurrying towards my great-uncle Marshall's house, La Forestière, where I spent part of my summer holidays each year. I had been out roaming about in the woods with André the young gamekeeper and I was thinking that if they had heard at La Forestière the two shots fired by a poacher—one at a roe deer and one at us—my great-aunt Lucy would be in a terrible state. Hearing her voice calling me in the distance I said to myself, "This is going to mean trouble," and ran down the narrow path that offered a short cut, leaving André standing in the middle of the road trying more or less successfully to swallow his anger. He still stood in the very attitude of trying to sweep me into his arms to kiss me, and at the moment of leaving him there had been a "goodnight, Miss!" which he intended for irony but which had sounded so ridiculously coltish that I had smiled.

At the end of the path I could just see the two parallel lines of the railing standing out whitely and at the end of them the white wooden gate. When I opened it I would be in the garden.

The railing and the gate were silhouetted against a soft June night that though moonless was so thickly studded with stars as to seem almost luminous.

Boughs met above my head and the path, dark and thin as a bottomless crevasse, stretched like a sword blade into the heart of the encircling night.

I glimpsed someone leaning on the railing, just a black shape like a silent motionless shadow. I can recall the sound of my own footsteps, the thorny brambles that tore at my dress as I ran. I can

Summer's Lease

remember the sighing of the leaves and high up through the branches glimpses of the milky way.

Great-aunt Lucy's call had come to me feebly from a distance, but from the silence of my own heart that beat so fiercely came a stronger soundless cry, "Philippe." I made a great effort to control myself. I seemed to see a shadowy form move from the railing and I believed Philippe was coming to meet me. For a moment I could see his mocking, friendly smile—sometimes so gay, sometimes so serious—the whiteness of his teeth, the way his mouth lifted at one side in a smile while the other remained turned down wearily or in disillusion. I seemed to see him peering forward into the dark, observant, ironically amused, interested as always; but Philippe had not moved. He was waiting for me, leaning on the railing, clear of the shadowy darkness in which I stood, outlined in a pool of sapphire light. He watched me come, noting the thinness of my dress, my agitation. He did not move or speak as I walked towards him forcing myself not to hurry. At last he said, "So there you are, imp. They've been worrying about you at the Marshalls. We were all sent out to look for you."

I took my chance to turn the thing off lightly.

"Were you," I said, "I wouldn't have thought it. They didn't send you very far—or very fast——." Then I added,

"You don't seem to be in much of a hurry when you search for me."

Philippe laughed a little at that but answered,

"I'm the one who's found you, aren't I?"

"Only in a way," I said, "because I wasn't really lost. I know my way round here perfectly, but it was just a fluke that you found the railing and the little gate and the path . . ."

"Don't forget," said Philippe, "I have a knack with flukes. Luck has a habit of coming my way."

I couldn't fathom then with just what slightly mysterious significance Philippe charged those words. I can't now. But I felt in them some menacing, indefinable quality, as though they hinted a concealed truth, a truth to which I preferred to remain blind. Unexpectedly Philippe asked,

"What were those shots? What were they shooting at?"

"At us," I replied, without pausing to think. "A poacher loosed off after having a try at a roe-deer. Luckily he misjudged it."

"Just as well," grunted Philippe, adding, "I'll be surprised if your great-aunt takes it so calmly."

"Must she know?" I asked, and at once wished I hadn't said it, for Philippe answered,

"Oh, I never worry about larks of that sort—especially with kids of your age."

I looked up, trying to interpret his words from his expression but could only guess at it. Perhaps he saw me more clearly as I turned towards the shadowy darkness that held him, for while I was confusedly trying to emphasise how much I had always enjoyed walking in the woods at dusk, he said,

"You don't need to make excuses to me. I've nothing against it." Then he added, "I've always felt there were too few friends for you at La Forestière."

I blessed the darkness as I felt my cheeks flaming, my eyes filling with tears. Philippe must have sensed something for he added, "What's wrong? Are you upset? Did I say something? If so, I didn't mean it."

He sounded genuinely sorry and his words had that eager warmth I loved in him. Feeling better I said quickly,

"It must be late: I ought to get back."

"Yes," answered Philippe, "Mrs. Marshall was really worried. She'll read the riot act."

Shrugging my shoulders I turned away, but he put a hand on my elbow and said gently, "Funny kid——" Then with an abrupt, rather forced cheerfulness he added, "If you'd like it, we can go out together in the woods tomorrow."

I gave a nod he can hardly have seen and said, "Yes," in a tone so low, yet so serious and emphatic that it made him smile.

"Run along then," he said, "I'll see you tomorrow." The hand that held my elbow relaxed, pushing me gently away, then for a moment I felt it lightly brush my hair as he said,

"Goodnight, kid. You're an attractive little thing."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Summer's Lease

I listened without a murmur to aunt Lucy's reproaches. I didn't hear a word of them.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It has always seemed to me that the three days which followed Philippe's arrival were the happiest of my girlhood.

Now that I try to bring them to life again, I hesitate over that word 'happy' and even in memory can hardly say the word. Perhaps because, seeing the whole thing from so far away in time, it has lost its importance, perhaps because it is no longer my focal point but only a detail in a childhood long past.

In my memory those days resemble one of those mountain scenes we all know, seamed with valleys and streams, dotted with pines and carpeted with grass and flowers. Above are rocks and summits of varying heights, and planted in the middle a chalet under the shade of a grove of chestnuts. Childish and charming, absurd yet right it stands, though from where I am looking it seems unreal, a toy. Yet if, suddenly finding myself on the doorstep, I knocked and saw the door open, I should go in and look round at the table and the fireplace, smiling to feel myself at home there, and say, "I'll stay."

At seventeen one always wants everything to stop at the moment of happiness and nothing to change. It is an odd fact, yet natural enough; absurd in one way, yet in another merely the proof that the things which make the young suffer have nothing to do with the world of time but are eternal.

Yet it was certainly not Philippe's way to prop things he found tottering. He was more likely to give them a little shove out of curiosity to see which way they would fall. "What appeals to me," he might have said, "is novelty—change—the doubtful issue. Truth, if there is such a thing, can only be found there; even death is not static." That isn't exactly what he ever said to me but the whole picture I have of him is tinged with just such an indefinable impression which he seemed to hug to himself secretly. It was the undercurrent, the real driving force of his life.

On the surface reflections ripple but underneath there flows the steady current of life that puts magic in the voice. Were they his or did I merely project on to him the promise, the melancholy, the

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appeal? Did I so need to find these qualities that I would have seen them in anyone else as easily as in Philippe? For the first time I knew what desire meant. Did Philippe know that? Was that what he wanted? Did he feel it too? At the time I asked no questions. Now I hesitate to answer them, yet whenever I think of Philippe I am filled with the certainty that amongst all the men blessed with real frankness—as men can be—Philippe was the most frank. It was both his strength and the basis of his powerful appeal.

No, those days were certainly not happy days, but they were days of an almost unbearable joy—and of hope.

Expectation, hope and longing filled them with a joy that nothing previously had given me and every hour, every moment was charged with it, rich with it, proliferated in it. Desire is the truest form of riches, insubstantial yet irresistible, material yet ideal and its pleasures are more cruel than the deepest wound.

When I walked by Philippe's side I was overwhelmed by emotion, I spoke in a choked voice, I muddled what I was saying or more often let it peter out into a half-desperate silence.

I dared snatch only hurried glances at him out of the corner of my eye, except when he turned suddenly towards me laughing. Then I too could laugh freely, happily, robbed for a moment of my embarrassment, delighted at finding around me and within me my everyday, enjoyable life, a life without danger or whose dangers no longer made me conscious of the jaws of the trap waiting to close on me. Of all that remains in my memory Philippe's profile is clearest. It was like a portrait on a medallion, not because of its handsomeness or its proportions or any weight of authority in it, still less of any serenity it displayed, but because of its fine-drawn intelligence, so mobile, so full of significance and infinite—contradictory—possibilities.

The country Philippe and I had wandered over during those three days had been well known to us both since childhood. I knew the woods of La Forestière better than Philippe. He knew better than I the paths that cut through the fields and hedges of La Fougeraie, bordering its streams and the banks of its ponds thick with reeds and water-lilies, where waterhens and ducks had their nests. He

Summer's Lease

knew the haunts of pike and perch and where in the muddy depths one might see the gleaming backs of carp.

Better even than the woods, ponds and parks, did we both know the wild scrub-land that spread over the rolling hills, the grass that grew there, the springtime broom, the autumn heather, the brambles and carpet of fern beneath which rabbits dug their burrows and nibbled at the roots of the fir seedlings. I doubt if a single acre of that land was unknown to Philippe and me or even a single spot of the ground we could see from the top of its slopes. And in two hollows to left and right, but out of sight of each other on account of this 'no man's land' which separated them, were the houses of La Forestière and La Fougeraie, as alike as sisters, each surrounded by well cared-for lawns, high wide-spreading trees, carefully raked walks, banks of rhododendrons and a few flower-beds where roses wilted in the drought and begonias unfolded in the sun.

We knew all the smells; where the wild fruit grew; the song of the birds and where they nested; what line every hare or covey of partridges would take if disturbed. Yet not once did we set out in the morning stillness without my feeling the thrill of adventure, an unforgettable thrill.

Thinking back I can see now to what extent the feeling of adventure, of seeking the unknown, attracted Philippe and, through him, me. I think that Philippe was always a little intoxicated by these things and that this febrile excitement contributed to the power he had over me.

He liked living riskily, taking gambles. He taught me the heady pleasure of balancing perilously on the brink of danger.

In the course of our walks Philippe never tried to make love to me, yet every personal remark however commonplace and habitual contained, when made by him, some tinge of warm intimacy. In his natural tone of voice as in his glance lurked this all embracing, indefinable tenderness.

To his words, as to his smile, it lent a certain quality of ambiguity, and I who could not but be conscious of it was to learn, without Philippe having to teach me, just how fascinatingly risky the game of love might be.

Luck offered me her fruits, as she so often does and I, innocently

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picking them, was astonished to find them, where they so often lie, hidden among thorns.

When on the way back from our morning walks the mid-day sun shone too hotly on fields that held no shade and I felt tired, I would say to myself, "What's the use of it all?" thinking longingly of the restful shade offered by the Marshalls' house. Yet as soon as I saw its white walls through the trees I could think only of the walk we would go at five o'clock and I asked nothing but to be alone with Philippe at dusk amongst the shadowy firs. In the evening as soon as the meal was over I used to say I was tired, go up to my room, slip quickly into bed and lie there a long time without being able to get to sleep.

I can hardly believe it all lasted only three days. Yet if it had lasted thirty, what else should I have remembered of it, what more should I have had or what less?

* * * * *

On our third day a storm broke, violently, without warning, as many others had done that summer. They poured out their torrents of rain on a country so parched that as soon as one passed all sign of it disappeared, leaving only a subtle perfume of earth in the air. Then everyone breathed more deeply, saying, "It smells of rain," as trees dripped, roses lifted their heads and the magnificent summer weather continued.

This particular storm caught Philippe and me in the meadows of La Fougeraie as we were on our way to the lake with our fishing rods. Philippe caught hold of my rod, seized me by the arm and spun me round saying, "You'd better come back with me," and as the first heavy drops came splashing down we ran together through the long grass. I had rarely been inside La Fougeraie, having no reason to visit old Monsieur Drouet, an eccentric and a great compiler of official papers, or Pierre, the elder brother whom I had always known but of whom I had never really taken much notice. The house was much like the Marshalls' but the atmosphere of cordiality and comfort that filled La Forestière was totally absent there.

Everything at La Fougeraie spoke of austerity, lack of attention and poverty. Old Drouet passed for being rich or having been so, but

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he had lost interest many years back and Pierre had had a hard job of it to keep up the estate and screw an adequate income out of it. In the hall Philippe pushed open the door of his room and ushered me into a large, light, well-proportioned room attractively decorated and furnished. At first glance one could see that the things were all 'good.' In fact nothing could have been more unlike my general impression of the Drouet's house. Half mockingly, half seriously Philippe said, "This is my place," then he shut the door behind us. I couldn't hide my surprise from him, but he only smiled, pushing me towards an armchair and saying he would make tea. He left the room by one of the two doors that faced me, indicating that the other led to his bedroom. Following him across a corridor to the tiny kitchen of which he was clearly very proud, I found it tiled in white, as clean as a bathroom and with nothing out of place. Philippe had taken off his jacket and put on a servant's apron. He was obviously enjoying himself and my surprise only added to his pleasure. Even in the most trivial things he seemed quick and deft, and he never stopped whistling or humming.

"Take a seat in the other room and wait for me," he said. "I'll bring tea in five minutes." As I was walking away he added, "You won't get a better cup anywhere, and my toast's pretty fair. Some day I'll do you pancakes like the farmers' wives do them hereabouts—but better than any farmer's wife for twenty miles round, you'll see."—"You're so modest," I said, and heard Philippe's blunt "Why should I be modest? I never spoil my pleasures by trying to combine them with virtues."

I don't know why I laughed since I didn't really understand what he meant. Perhaps it was only to drown the sound of the little voice that whispered to me, "Don't trust his promises. You'd be a fool to believe him. He'll never ask you back here; he'll forget. Take a good look at everything so that you don't forget." I took it all in in detail, listening to Philippe whistling in the kitchen as he got out the cups. I repeated to myself, "Now I know him for the first time, as he is—the real person." I didn't even smile at the naivety of this idea. I honestly felt I had discovered the truth about Philippe. I let my glance slide over the things in the room, feeling that perhaps they could tell me more about him than he had ever told me himself.

There was a time when I thought mere objects were bound to be less cruel than the unguarded words of one's friends. I was wrong. On a low table beside me I saw a great bowl of flowers. Evidently they had come from the border under Philippe's window, and it was obvious that they had been arranged by someone with a real feeling for them. "A man or a woman?" I asked myself, answering hurriedly, "Who cares? It makes no difference——"

Philippe brought in a tray and put it on the table beside me. He poured the tea then buttered me a slice of toast, sprinkling a pinch of salt on it. I let him do everything, laughing as I watched him. The tea and the toast were perfect. I congratulated him and he produced cigarettes which we smoked in a silence that held no awkwardness.

The rain was still coming down in sheets. The view from the windows was leaden. They were high windows with the once fashionable narrowness now seen only in old country houses.

Philippe, who had sat down on one of the window-seats, a cigarette in his mouth, his hands thrust into his pockets, turned, leaning his forehead and one elbow against the glass. For a few moments he stared out at the falling rain. In the grey distance one could just see Breuilly steeple. It dominated every view in that part of the world, rising at the end of each field, towering above each wood. Its sharp point, golden weathercock and grey slates have a place in all my memories.

Seeing it standing up there in the rain I remember thinking, Philippe sees it too but he's dreaming of something else. His mind isn't on anything here or in sight. He's not even thinking of me; he's forgotten I'm in the room. As though to confirm my impression Philippe muttered absently, "Miserable storm. When is the rain going to stop?"

For a moment it seemed to me that all the darkness of the sky and the storm gathered round me to overwhelm me. Then, when it had become almost unbearable, a flash of lightning tore across the sky and the thunder roared. I did my best to throw off my misery and said laughing, "You see; they're listening to you; the storm's moving off. Have you got the Gods on your side?" Philippe did not answer. He didn't appear to have heard. Then I asked "Are you the person who picks the flowers here and arranges them?"

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Philippe turned round. "Yes," he said. "Why shouldn't I? Do you think it stupid?"

There was something more than impatience in his words: they were abrupt, almost biting.

It was my turn not to answer. I shrugged my shoulders and buried my face among the flowers.

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The storm passed. There remained only the occasional distant rumble, the dripping leaves, the vivid green of the young unripe wheat and high above the narrow windows a thin rift of blue sky between two louring grey clouds. Over the whole countryside spread the warm golden glow of evening. It was seven o'clock and I knew I ought to be going. My great-uncle, in every other way the most tolerant of men, was a real disciplinarian about punctuality for meals.

I had had experience of this one day and it was not easy to forget. I had been very conscious of spoiling one of Henry Marshall's greatest pleasures, for he was an epicure. In him it was not so much a matter of appetite as of the pleasure of social living, of producing a genial expansiveness in which all around him shared. Whenever he took his place at the table, testing the blade of the carver with his thumb, ready to cut into the joint, which every day of my holidays had been placed in the same spot before him on the white cloth, my great-uncle's kindly face radiated the same pleasure of anticipation. To have spoilt such an agreeable picture even once left me a little remorseful.

I got up and held out my hand to Philippe, but he said he would come with me and we set off together. We walked fast along the wet paths.

The countryside was beautiful, the air fragrant and scarcely less calm than before the storm, a scent of moist earth and soaking grass steaming from the fields in a misty cloud. For a few moments I forgot Philippe's room and that state of intimacy which I had approached so nearly only to find it barred to me. I breathed-in the peace and freshness of the fields, filling my lungs with them, then at a bend in the path a waft of honeysuckle filled the air around me. There's no scent in the world that I like better, but this time it was

a cruel reminder of Philippe's room, and breathing it I was overwhelmed by the memory of the flowers there. That memory hovered in my mind like mist over the fields but smotheringly, a mist that would not let me breathe.

Philippe left me when we reached the garden. For a moment he had hesitated, glancing abstractedly from window to window of the house as though one of them might suddenly open and someone call. But the windows remained shut, blank and mysterious with the light of the setting sun reflected in their panes. Philippe shook hands and said goodnight, smiling absent-mindedly at me with the rather forced smile of someone who doesn't really know why he does it. I waited for something more, hoping he might say, as he had done on other evenings, "See you in the morning, kid—nine o'clock at the bend in the avenue." But he said nothing and obviously the effort I was making not to question him or to prompt the words I hoped for must have showed in my face, for suddenly I saw his eyes harden. A look of boredom, weariness and mute reproach filled them. He turned and walked away. When he reached the first trees in the avenue he turned to wave and I pushed shut the gate and crossed the garden. Reaching the house I heard the quarter chiming on the hall clock. I had just time, for it was seven-fifteen and we didn't dine till the half-hour. Walking round through the garden into the courtyard to the old barn that my great-uncle had turned into a garage, I found Jacques hosing down the muddy wheels of the car. "Has someone come?" I asked, and Jacques for whom our family counted I think rather more than his own replied, beaming, "It's Miss Joyce, missy."

Passing through the hall by the open door of the dining-room I saw aunt Lucy busy putting the final touches to the table. "Hurry and change," she called, "Joyce is here. The gong will go any minute."

At the foot of the stairs I ran into uncle Henry climbing up from the cellar laden with bottles. He winked at me saying, "Only the best this evening! Joyce is here."

I climbed slowly upstairs. I was conscious only of the silence that filled me and of an oleander leaf I had plucked as I crossed the verandah and which I was mechanically rolling between my fingers.

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From the head of the stairs on the first floor I could see an open door at the end of the landing. It was Joyce's door—next to mine. I paused as I came to it. Looking in I could see empty trunks and on the bed piles of clothes which a servant was busy hanging up in the wardrobe. At the far end of the room by the window Joyce was doing her hair in front of the mirror. She had stopped with one arm raised and, still holding a curl between two fingers, had got up and moved to the window, leaning forward till her forehead touched the glass. Now she must have felt my presence, for straightening up sharply she turned and saw me. "Oh, Maddie, how pleased I am to see you," she cried, hurrying towards me. I rushed to meet her with arms flung wide and we kissed each other. As my lips brushed her cheek I thought, there can't be anyone more beautiful in the whole world.



That evening, as always, we moved out to the verandah after dinner. Paved with shiny floor tiles it ran the length of the house and under its glass roof daubed with white, vines hung from tightly stretched wires, their stems wound around the pillars which supported the roof. High up among the branches were a few small bunches of shrivelled grapes which Jacques treated with elaborate care, picking them when they were ready and even fastening paper bags over them to keep off the wasps. I doubt whether any insect would ever actually have been tempted by such miserable little seeds, bitter as they were and hard as pebbles. But that didn't prevent Jacques, uncle Henry and aunt Lucy from describing how each autumn when they first came to La Forestière they used to celebrate their 'vintage' on the verandah at the beginning of September. This inevitably led to melancholy observations that, "Summers now are not what they once were." This year it was hard to believe, for it had been fine since the beginning of June and if occasionally a storm abruptly darkened the deep blue of the sky and poured down such a flood as the one that had caught Philippe and me, the sky soon cleared and the ground was as quickly dry. This dryness was in fact a cause of some worry to my uncle on account of his fir plantations, for if a fire were to break out there it could cause great destruction. He was talking about this that

evening while we sat rather damply in the mist that steamed slowly up to obscure the darkening sky. More than one of us must, I imagine, have cursed these sessions on the verandah. It was the least pleasant, most uncomfortable spot in the house, stuffy when shuttered, draughty and liable to be wet when open. Still, it offered a wide choice of seats of all shapes and sizes, two or three benches and several tables, and in the evening could be lit by a lamp bright enough for my aunt to knit by.

We used all at times to catch our feet in the flex which led from the lamp to a plug in the hall, and each time the lamp and its pink shade nearly went flying. But aunt Lucy seemed quite undisturbed. Seated bolt upright in her armchair, she knitted away imperturbably. It was she who 'supervised' our evening just as uncle Henry had supervised our meal a few minutes earlier. That meal had been a more elaborate affair than usual with a greater range of wines, and had lasted a long time, so it was almost dark when we sat down on the verandah. There was no moon but the night was warm and restful. The stars seemed very distant seen through the veil of mist that the storm had left floating above the fields.

I helped Joyce to serve coffee. Uncle Henry, as always, poured and handed the liqueurs himself. I can still see his happy, smiling face turned on Joyce. He was proud of her beauty, her attractiveness, her charm, proud that she was 'a real thoroughbred Marshall,' straight from Louisiana, the Marshalls' ancestral home, and daughter of his younger brother and of one of his cousins. He would call her 'my beauty,' play up to her and spoil her.

I can still see the silver coffee service glinting among the shadows and the ordered ranks of cups and glasses surrounding the bottles and coffee jug on the tray, while in my own fingers I see a little cup uneasily balanced on its saucer. This I held out to Joyce who said, "Give it to Pierre."

"Pierre?" I hadn't seen or heard him arrive. He was sitting close beside Joyce in the shade of one of the oleander bushes, but not dressed in his usual corduroys and tweed jacket. Tonight he wore well-cut hunting kit, faultless breeches, a stock and highly polished tops. In his hand he carried a crop with which he flicked at the side of his boots. Riding kit was not the Marshalls' idea of

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evening dress, even for an informal evening, but it was clearly Pierre's idea of 'the right thing' to wear.

I was on the point of saying something to this effect when I suddenly realised how tactless it would be. Pierre we knew was rather uncouth; we all called him 'bear'. But the fact that he improved on this with 'bear-the-appropriately-named' couldn't hide the fact that under a rough surface lay a sensitive nature. I said nothing and watched Pierre, seeing him, not his clothes, seeing the way he sat turned towards my cousin, the way he looked at her. I watched him and suddenly it was as though I saw him for the first time, yet I knew he had looked exactly the same last year. Passionately in love with Joyce, miserably unhappy, coping as best he could with a pain that alone made life real to him, he was fighting desperately against a vain jealousy, a vainer hope. For a moment I saw Pierre as he was. For a moment I saw in his plight my own.

I held out his cup with trembling fingers and he thanked me with a quick smile. I thought to myself, he's the kind that really believes in the possibility of happiness and all the other things Philippe will never believe in. I could have wept.

I pulled back my chair to get out of the lamplight and it was at that moment I heard the sound of steps approaching through the garden.

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Philippe appeared over the edge of the verandah like a swimmer borne up on the crest of a wave. Beside me Joyce had taken out her compact and was leaning forward peering into its little mirror. She lifted her head and went suddenly rigid, then her hands sank on to her lap. The reddish gold of her hair, lit by the lamp's pinkish glow, spread like a scarf across her bare shoulders.

Philippe bent over the hand my great-aunt held out to him, then turning towards my cousin he slowly raised her hand and kissed it. As it sank back on to her white dress, the scarlet nails gleaming in her lap, I caught the look that passed between the two of them. Then for a flash my eye caught Philippe's and, in that moment, I knew I was once more alone. I stood up.

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Shaking my hand Philippe said, "Are you cold? Your fingers are icy."

I didn't answer.

A few seconds later he added, "Aren't you pleased to see me, kid?" And again I made no reply.

Excusing myself to aunt Lucy, I pretended that the wine had been too much for me, and heard uncle Henry say it was high time I learned to take a few drinks. I heard Philippe's laugh and Joyce's voice then I climbed upstairs to bed.

From the window of my room I saw someone open the garden gate and slip away into the darkness. I realised it was Pierre. That was the only evening he spent with us during the whole of the summer.

* * * * *

Neither distance nor the long perspective of time helps me to form a clear picture of the days that followed Joyce's arrival. They remain jumbled together, tangled inextricably with what they signified for me—the cruel lesson of having to learn how to wait.

At that time I had no conception of such a thing. Seventeen is an age for heroics, when one is ready to take on the world, or to hurl oneself against any clearly defined obstacle. One doesn't grudge suffering—even life. But when one risks death it is because of the belief that death can be used to serve life, because one wishes through it to purge life of all its shortcomings.

The kind of patience needed to understand and to accept one's own limitations without shrinking, to commit oneself only to that which is honestly in one's power to carry through, that kind of patience is rarely an attribute of youth, frowning as it does on enthusiasm and having little use for high spirits. Requiring humility and submission, it can only be achieved when one is worn out with rebelling against it, for it demands that too much be given up and forces one to be content with too little.

At seventeen one writes off one's failures or one fights furiously and, if there are times when one submits, it is still with a rebellious and angry submission. Everything one can't get, one attempts to destroy in one's own heart, chewing it over again and again, a food without nourishment and bitter to the taste.

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I can find no record of the date of Joyce's arrival. But it always seems to me that it must have been the twenty-first of June and that the evening on which Joyce and Philippe met each other again must have been that of the solstice, the first evening of summer which for all its brightness speaks of coming winter nights.

From then on there was not to be a single day when I failed to see Philippe during the whole month Joyce and I spent at the Marshalls.

About ten o'clock every morning he would come to fetch my cousin and take her out for a walk. With her he covered all the country round as he had earlier done with me. The first few times I was out on the lawn in front of the house when he arrived, but I soon took to going up to my room immediately after breakfast. I would have recognised his step amongst a thousand as he crossed the wooden bridge at the foot of the garden, or the creak of the gate as he swung it open, or his voice calling—when she was not ready and waiting for him on the balcony—to Joyce.

How many times did I swear I would not look out of the window? How many times was I furious at having broken my promise?

I remember a morning when I had shut the window and drawn the curtains and my great-aunt, who had called to me without my hearing her, came in at the door and pulled up short saying, "Maddie my child, what *are* you up to? It's muggy enough in the morning anyway. Let in some air; open the window." Then looking at me rather anxiously she had added, "You're not ill are you? You haven't a headache?"

I had reassured her as well as I could. After that I didn't draw the curtains and I left the window open—and every morning I saw Philippe bend over Joyce's hand. I could imagine how they looked at each other, guess what they said and did—what they felt for one another.

Every morning without moving from my window I experienced to the full, despair, hope, self-delusion. I was caught on the thorns that border such paths and struggled to free myself. I did free myself and learned how one can slip away from any fingers that clutch at one but that the fingers of uncertainty are the strongest of all.

I shall never know if the others were puzzled by the way I behaved. They never let it show, yet sometimes I could see in the way uncle

Henry looked at me a kind of pity instead of his normal amused and friendly smile. I was afraid they would ask questions. I did my best to avoid or forestall them, and was always to be seen now with a book under my arm or poring over one spread out on my knees. The page I never read was like a mirror in whose depths I saw myself slowly taking shape, a landscape where only one shadowy creature walked. I was always alone and all the scenes through which I drifted were alike, fashioned from the same longing, the same summer sky, the same misery, the same splendour. But if on occasion my shadow crossed another's it was always mine that paused in expectation and the other's that moved on.

And, dominating everything I saw, stood the thin, pointed spire of Breuilly, piercing a stormy sky as I had seen it framed in the windows of Philippe's room. Everywhere there was the same stillness, the same expectant hush. When it became too unbearable, I would try to escape down by the railings at the end of the shadowed path. Yet it was there that I was most conscious of my loneliness, of the new patience and wisdom that were being forced upon me. These and the few grim truths they brought in their train stood before me there like inescapable jailers. I could see them in the distance through the criss-cross of branches like dark marks against the whiteness of the railings, standing erect and motionless. They would watch me walking towards them, and fall silent. If momentarily I shut my eyes I could sense their seriousness, their air of sadness, their expectancy, the attentive look they turned on me.

When I got near enough to hear, they would always whisper the same despairing words to me, telling me how they had come there just to meet me, how it was useless trying to escape, that the path led nowhere else and that, whatever I might believe, they were the same shadow towards which I had run for the first time one June evening. Yet I often went back to the railings, driven by the same vain hope, certain of encountering the same misery, trying desperately not to admit the reality of these jailers when I glimpsed them in the distance. For a moment I would imagine that it was Philippe and Joyce standing side by side listening to the sound of my approaching footsteps. My heart would beat as though it must break and I would stop running till the silence around me became a melancholy interior silence, the

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death of all my hopes. Then I would admit it was all a delusion and, desperately hiding my face in my hands, run towards those dark figures, sobbing.

Yet, remembering those ghostly visions, I can at least be thankful to them for sparing me the pains of jealousy. I was never jealous of Joyce; nothing in my despair had power to destroy the love and admiration I felt for her. Her beauty had far too strong a hold on me for that. The warmth of her smile, her poise, her charm made her in my eyes more a goddess than a woman, and not a remote or intimidating goddess but one whose friendly sympathetic attention was always directed to helping me in my discovery of life and its meaning.

That evening I sat beside her on the verandah. She had leant her head against the back of her chair and I could see the thick curly hair she described as her 'mop' gleaming in the rosy light that bathed it. I could see the easy curve of her neck and shoulders and imagine the full, well-moulded breasts below. Her white silk dress lifted to the rhythm of her breathing and I was reminded of the Venus de Cirene. I saw then that Philippe had simply *had to* love Joyce, that it would have been unnatural in him not to love her. I saw her strong beautifully shaped hands lying motionless in her lap, and I knew then that what I really needed was to be able to lay my forehead in that lap so that there, rather than before any ghostly comforter, I might weep my fill, hearing only her voice repeating, "Poor Maddie; poor little Maddie."

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I say I knew, but what could I know, torn as I was by my hopes—and only seventeen?

One day when I was alone with my great-aunt in the drawing room, Joyce and Philippe walked past the window and suddenly I heard myself asking, "Will they marry?"—"I hope so," answered aunt Lucy, "but neither of them has said anything." And she added, as if forgetting me, "They'd make a fine pair." I saw then how impossible it would be for me to ask the one question I burned to ask, "Are they lovers?"

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Helene Dubois

About the middle of July there were a few days of unbearably hot weather. Joyce and Philippe gave up going their walks and used to spend their mornings in long discussion under the sweeping branches of an old tulip tree which lent shade to the lawn. Seated side by side in deck chairs they talked in intimate undertones and when I had to pass nearby I could see them through the leaves and hear them, though I pretended not to notice anything.

But one morning Joyce called to me and I couldn't pretend not to hear so I went over to her.

"It's time we celebrated," she said.

"Celebrated?" I queried, looking surprised.

It was Joyce's turn to be surprised.

"Aunt Lucy says you're almost eighteen."

I sighed. "Yes," I answered. "I'd forgotten." Then I added, emphatically, "But I don't want any celebrations."

"What an idea," said Philippe. "Why not?"

I didn't answer and Joyce said gently, "Being eighteen's something important, Maddie. That birthday's a big day."

"Yes," Philippe added, "eighteen's the age to be." I answered, without examining too closely what my words meant, "The best age is always the one that's just over." Philippe started to smile and I added, "Anyway, I don't like family occasions."

It was quite untrue and Joyce knew it. She said laughing, "You're wrong. If I were in your place I'd never stop people celebrating. I love being spoilt and getting presents and flowers."

I couldn't stand out altogether against my cousin's obvious goodwill.

"I'm the same about flowers and presents," I said, "it's all the talk and advice and congratulations and being smothered in relations' kisses I can't stand."

"We'll protect you," said Philippe.

A few days later I celebrated my eighteenth birthday. No-one made any pompous speeches; champagne flowed at dinner and I got lots of flowers and chocolates. Joyce gave me a gold bracelet, Philippe a Persian goblet, and both kissed me.

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Towards the end of this memorable day I went, as dusk was falling,

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to confront my 'ghosts.' I ran, without slowing, right to the end of the path and stared out across the open space beyond the fence, saying to myself, "This is the end of being a child, the end of everything rooted in childhood and touched with its magic. This is the end of happiness," I said. "I have always known as the years passed how fragile they were, how quickly the days bore them away, but what I could not know was the price one paid for hope, joy, desire—or love."

It seemed to me suddenly as though the world of accepted certainties I carried within me had been brutally torn open and from that wound had been born this new knowledge, the realisation that there is nothing—no joy, no pain, no love that is not obliterated by death; that of this great adventure, life, nothing endures but its passing memories. I asked myself, appalled, "Can a time come when I no longer love Philippe?" And even to think of it in that peaceful dusk filled me with agonising despair.

I heard the dinner bell ring and turned back to the house. Passing through the shrubbery, feeling the leaves brushing against my fingers, it came home to me that they were tougher, more enduring, more reliable—more faithful even—than I should ever be. At dinner, as I've said, champagne flowed. I drank more than usual.

* * * * *

A few days later a thunderstorm in the forenoon brought the hot spell to an end.

During the previous evening a fire had swept through the home plantation, one of the pinewoods of which my uncle was most proud.

That evening, as every evening, our gathering had broken up about eleven. I don't think any of us wished to prolong it for the heat was stifling and the mosquitoes unbearable. It had needed all the deference we felt for great-aunt Lucy to keep the family circle intact around the pink lamp. However, contrary to his general rule, uncle Henry was the first to leave us. He wanted, he said, to join his young woodman on the nightly round.

I can still see myself as I stood, a few minutes later, at the foot of the stairs just ready to go up to my room.

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The bell on the roof of the coach-house, never used except in emergencies, suddenly began to toll loudly. Soon other bells at La Fougeraie and neighbouring farms took up the alarm, the sound of them echoing across the hidden fields. I heard a sound of footsteps approaching the house, then the door was thrust open and uncle Henry shouted from the threshold, "One of the woods is on fire," adding, as he saw Philippe coming out of the drawing-room, "We'll need help."

Uncle Henry hurried out again and Philippe followed him at a run. Joyce, I imagine, must have followed Philippe.

Aunt Lucy appeared at the end of the passage by the little door leading to the outbuildings. "What is the matter?" she asked in a worried tone. "There's a fire," I answered, and without bothering about her any further rushed out of the house and off into the night. I heard the sound of doors slamming shut and feet following behind me, but I never looked round.

Before me stretched an avenue whose oaks towered up to a starry sky on my right, whilst on my left they stood out like black silhouettes against a sky redly lit by the fire. A passing breeze carried with it a smell of burning. I paused a moment. The sound of footsteps following me had ceased but I heard the low, distant rumbling of thunder. People coming from the meadows had scrambled through its hedges into the avenue and were ahead of me. They moved in single file carrying forks and spades on which the light glinted. One of them had a lantern; they were all running. I hurried on and joined them. They were from one of the La Fougeraie farms and said Philippe had given them the alarm. "What bloody luck," one of them muttered, "the rain'll be here by morning."

I asked where Philippe was and someone said, "He's been ringing Le Hameau and Breuilly to get help, but I reckon he'll have joined Mr. Marshall by now."

Another voice added, "Mr. Pierre's with Mr. Marshall too."

Pierre . . . how little I had thought about him. How little his recent absence from our evening gatherings had struck me or, seemingly, any of the others.

I heard someone say as they passed, "Mr. Marshall thinks a lot of the home plantation!"

Summer's Lease

It was true. I had often heard my uncle boast of this wood whose well-grown trees promised a fine profit in the future.

We were now getting near the fire and the breeze blew scorchingly on our faces. Fed on dry pine needles and resinous wood the sound of the fire had in it something machine-like as well as a ferocious animal quality.

People were flocking in from across the fields and making their way towards a part of the plantation so far untouched by the fire and separated from it by a narrow strip of uncultivated land. There some were busy digging trenches while others hacked down the undergrowth, and it was there that my great-uncle, whom I could see silhouetted against the flames, was battling to preserve his property. I heard him shouting orders and his voice seemed to me commanding as it echoed through that strange silence.

Someone said to me, "Not that way. Go round to the right towards the hill. You'll be safe there. . . ."

I wanted to know where Philippe and Joyce had gone. I didn't want to run away from this danger my great-uncle was facing or leave these people who for perhaps the first time in my life I felt in some ill-defined, instinctive way to be 'mine.' Besides, the sight of the blaze caused me a kind of wild pleasure as well as fear. The sight in itself was magnificent but the feeling it stirred in me was one of a frenzy of destructiveness, a surge of rebellion. The fire purged me of my 'ghosts,' broke their sway and blotted out their traces as I could never have done by myself. For a few moments I stood quite still, revelling in my terror, face to face with the fire, hearing its sullen roar, feeling the naked blaze of it beating on my skin. Terrified rabbits darted for the fields, the silent wing of some great night bird brushed me in passing; I was alone, isolated between the fire and the surrounding wall of darkness. I shall never forget the lonely exhilaration of that moment. Then I became conscious that all the trees and undergrowth might catch and once more started to run.

* * * * *

I almost bumped into a group of men coming from a side turning. One of them looked round. "So it's you again," he said. I recognised the voice of André the young gamekeeper I had 'walked out on',

that evening which seemed so long ago. Evidently the memory still rankled for he called after me as I ran on, "You're very frightened of me, miss, to be in such a hurry?"

Childishly annoyed I swung round and headed straight for the home plantation. The fire must have started in the heart of the wood for there was a great blaze there as bright as molten metal. Trees collapsing into it threw up clouds of smoke, sparks and blazing twigs. I tried to get nearer still but one of the La Fougeraie farmers saw me and called out, "Keep away from there, Miss Madeleine!"

And my uncle added in a tone that admitted of no contradiction, "Get out of here, Maddie. Go up on the hill with the others. I won't have you here!"

I had to obey. The 'others' were standing on the ridge of the hill, their faces lit intermittently by the fire, the sky glowing redly behind them. I recognised my great-aunt, our servants and some of the Drouets', old Jacques' family and a number of the farm people. I could see no sign of Philippe or Pierre, nor—at first—of Joyce. But pushing through the undergrowth and climbing the hillside I recognised a figure—standing half-way up the slope and apparently waiting for something—as my cousin.

I suppose she was waiting to join Philippe or at least find out where he'd gone. I was a few steps away from her when a wall of flame shot up between us. Joyce screamed. I shouted for help. The flames spurted up just where I had seen her standing and it seemed to me she must be in the middle of them, on fire. I heard a voice call,

"It's Miss Joyce!"

And another added,

"A spark must have caught the grass."

A man passed me, running, shoving me aside roughly and plunging into the flames where I had last seen Joyce. I began to run as well, then Philippe passed me and I saw him seize Joyce from the arms of Pierre who was carrying her towards the top of the hill.

In a few strides I was alongside them and could read clearly in Philippe's face the agony he had been through, an agony in which surprise and anger were strangely blended. And I could also see how the expression on Pierre's face hardened.

Summer's Lease

In the morning the storm broke and, as happens only too often in our part of the world, summer was obliterated in a downpour lasting several days.

Ceaselessly the rain washed from land and sky the faintest traces of summer and if a little clear sky appeared momentarily between two clouds it was, in spite of its lighter colouring, only like the glimmer which hints of water at the bottom of a stagnant well.

In the direction of the woods, charred trees stood silhouetted like damned souls along the blackened hillside, nor were the human beings framed by this grisly decor much more cheerful. I felt like ground which has absorbed so much water that it is slowly losing its identity and dissolving. My great-aunt had assumed an air of sweetness, exaggerated patience and forced cheerfulness such as one displays by a sick-bed. Uncle Henry bore up well enough; his round kindly face still smiled, his conversation was still fun but his pale blue eyes looked sad and, when he believed himself unheard, ear-piercing 'damns' would echo round the house. The servants were full of a routine sympathy and old Jacques seemed to be genuinely upset. Joyce and Philippe were, I think, the only people to be quite unaffected by what had happened—in fact by anything but themselves. And how could I tell what was going on inside them without being clairvoyant? I saw them together and their 'togetherness' filled me with a depression that, like the dreary greyness outside seemed to blot out the light and warmth of summer.

Yet a part of my mind remained unaffected and observant, seeming at times to catch fleeting glimpses of a different aspect of affairs, something impossible to state precisely or define, something which I distrusted almost as soon as I became aware of it, but which had its root, it seemed to me, in those looks exchanged between Pierre and Philippe over Joyce's unconscious body.

* * * * *

As old Jacques had predicted, the weather improved a bit towards the end of the month, but it remained changeable and louring as so often at the turn of the year.

In the middle of the day we cursed the muggy heat and in the evening the heavy, wintry dew. In the morning, mist banked

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above the meadows hinted at autumn, and day and night we grumbled about milk turning, about mosquitoes and bluebottles and the melancholy crows flapping across the bare stubbles.

Then in a better patch, as the sun shone momentarily between two white clouds or for the length of a gust of wind that temporarily dispersed them, summer would be reborn and human sorrow forgotten.

Joyce and Philippe resumed their walks, and I my pretence of work, my nose buried in a book.

One morning Joyce told me that she and Philippe were thinking of exploring the source of the Jozelle next day and would be delighted if I would go with them.

The Jozelle is a lively stream that crosses my uncle's land and skirts his garden. Flowing in one place over a small dam to form a tinkling waterfall, in another where it is larger, dividing round a little overgrown island, it passes finally, brown and sluggish, under a wooden bridge. The source lies about five miles from the house. "We'll set off early," said my cousin, "and take a picnic lunch." We can have an hour's rest in the oak-grove by the spring and we'll be back by teatime.

As I listened to Joyce's level tones, I seemed to hear another voice inside me muttering darkly, "You must get out of this. It's no good going with them. You mustn't give in. Say 'no.'" I looked up and catching Joyce's eye, seeing her smile, I said gently, "If I won't be in the way, I'll certainly come."

She put an arm round my shoulders and drew me towards her, saying half-mockingly, half-seriously, "Dear Maddie, of course you won't be in the way."

All through the day I kept turning this defeat over in my mind and reproaching myself for it, but next morning I was ready in good time and set off with the two of them.

* * * * *

At first I walked behind them. The path was narrow and Philippe and Joyce side by side set a good pace. Between us Brick, my uncle's dog, chased and bounded, but after he had worked off his first excitement he followed close at their heels. Seeing him so subdued, the realisation suddenly came to me that I also was following them just

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like a dog. I pushed ahead and caught them up. In spite of the undergrowth I worked my way in alongside Joyce. She was singing old Louisiana plantation songs while Philippe whistled the accompaniments.

Without stopping, Joyce smiled at me. Taking my arm, she held it firmly in hers for the rest of the walk. A little further on she said, "Join in." I told her I sang out of tune. It was untrue, but I got no pleasure from the sound of my own voice. Joyce's voice was a little harsh and edgy, heavy and throaty; in its upper register pure and clear with a mellow flexibility. It was exactly the voice for negro songs and perhaps it was from having heard and sung them since childhood that Joyce, the white girl, had achieved so perfectly the primitive, velvety tone of the black woman.

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No doubt I was also moved by the nostalgic quality of these songs. For hearing them conjured up for me the far-off lands where Joyce had lived and where perhaps she would live again—with Philippe. I said to myself, "They will go away and I shall stay here." It was as though I were saying, "They will live but no life is possible for me."

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In the oak-grove the air was fresh and the ground green with moss. The Jozelle rises in a little valley where the sun shines through tapering branches. Its source is a pool of water cupped in a hollow of the rock and lying so perfectly still that one might take it for some transparent yet solid substance. The deep bubbling of the spring within barely troubles its surface and in its undisturbed purity one might believe it to be crystal embedded in the rock. Leaning over it you can see the green reflection of leaves, and if there is anything remarkable about the place it is that it should be so conventionally yet so deliciously idyllic. That at least is how I remember it.

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Joyce had leant over the pool, murmuring half sadly, "How still, how clear. One can't tell what's hidden——"

"What does that mean?" I said, sitting beside her.

"Oh, something that seems absurd but that I can't help feeling,"

she answered, adding in a lower voice, "Something I feel overwhelmingly."

Philippe had joined us but without catching Joyce's last words. Now he asked, "What seems absurd?"

To cover up my cousin's delay in answering, I said, "Joyce dislikes the water being so very clear."—"Why on earth?" cried Philippe.

"How can I explain," said Joyce, "I've hardly thought it out. It's so indescribable and imprecise in one way and so obvious in another. Don't you see yourself how alien such perfection is to us, how hostile and inhuman. Words are lost in it, the voices that say them—the sounds that carry them. It has always existed: it will never end. Doesn't that frighten you?"

Neither Philippe nor I could help realising the seriousness with which Joyce spoke. Philippe looked at her with some surprise, yet when he answered her it was to rip through the invisible bond that joined us:

"I didn't know you were such a deep, abstract thinker."

"I hope I'm not," answered Joyce, laughing, "you make it sound so pompous."

"Good," said Philippe, "I'm glad to have your word for it."

We lunched on the rocks by the spring and lay down afterwards for a nap on the mossy ground. I rested my head on my clasped hands, but I didn't sleep. Without being too obvious about it I watched the others under lowered eyelids.

Joyce lay between Philippe and me and was fast asleep. I almost wrote 'profoundly' asleep, for her face was so peaceful and she seemed so divorced from all human contact that I was reminded of what she must look like at night. I don't imagine Philippe ever glanced away from her but I could barely see his eyes which were shaded by the turned-down brim of his hat. Whenever I looked towards him I felt I was being lured into some ambush and quickly looked away again.

It was wonderfully peaceful; the silence seemed to be waiting for the first plashings of the Jozelle. The valley was an oasis in the desert, and the oak trees like palms were full of the muted song of birds. Far off one could hear doves; nearer there were the cooings of pigeons

Summer's Lease

with sometimes the whistle of an oriole, sounds that together made up the one golden voice of summer. I wondered what it would all have seemed like without Joyce—without me.

I could hear Brick at my feet snapping at mosquitoes. Suddenly some animal moving through the fern brought him to his feet. A hare crossed the hollow and the dog raced after it, barking. Joyce stirred and opened her eyes. I got up as though intending to set off into the wood and Philippe asked me in a whisper where I was going. Making a vague gesture in the direction Brick had taken, I moved away.

I pushed on without any clear aim through the undergrowth and soon came to the edge of the wood. Dark firs mingled with the oaks, and beyond their trunks I could see the bare yellowish fields. Where earth and sky met in the distance the Breuilly belfry seemed like a pigmy toy. I sat down on the dry grass. Faint and far away I could hear the sound of Brick barking. Gradually the sound drew nearer and soon, panting and out of breath, he came and lay down beside me, putting his head on my knees. While I patted him he gazed at me unwinkingly.

I tried to forget Philippe and Joyce, to empty my mind of anxiety and hope and to let that emptiness fill itself with whatever chanced to come before me, the colours of stubble, earth or mud. I pressed my hands on the ground and breathed from them the smell of hay and fir-cones. It seemed to me the very smell of silence. I listened to the silence from which occasionally would spring a sound. Silence: the sound of a twig cracking, a seed-pod bursting, a fir-cone falling from its tree. Silence: and in it the distant calling of wood pigeon and nearer to me the panting of a dog, the beating of my heart, the faint stir of my own movements. Though ill-defined, the thought came to me, "Can I go on living like this from moment to moment, perpetually in the present without memory of the past or thought for the future?" To do it, I know I should have had to set off there and then across country without ever looking back, taking Brick for companion.

As I stood up I noticed, beyond where the tall grass ended, a little clearing overgrown with willow-herb. I picked some, thinking, "I'll give this to Joyce."

Coming out of the wood into the ride I heard Philippe saying to

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Joyce who stood facing him, "I promise——" and it seemed to me that such words must fill her with happiness enough for a lifetime. But her answer was a quick, "Please, Philippe, no promises——" She seemed to hesitate, then with an attempt at a smile she looked up at him and added, "You frighten me, my dear. Promises aren't really in your line."

"They used not to be," Philippe answered, "but you've changed all that. You've changed me. Don't you understand?"

He took a step towards her but she moved quickly back, turning on him a look at once penetrating and resigned.

Then they must have heard me, for Philippe said, "Ah, there you are, kid." I recognised the tone of a few weeks back, persuasive but lightly mocking.

I didn't answer, but went to Joyce and held out my flowers. "They're for you," I said.

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Two days later Joyce was late for dinner. That wasn't like her—and it was still less like her not to have changed before she joined us. The Marshalls were entertaining a couple of friends that night. I can't remember who they were or what they looked like, but I do remember what surprise and uneasiness my cousin's lateness caused, the agitation my aunt showed in her brusque announcement that we must go in without Joyce and her consternation when Joyce did finally join us.

Uncle Henry had at first looked surprised, then pained. During the entire evening he seemed withdrawn and it was plain that he had to make a considerable effort in order to entertain his guests as he thought fitting.

As for the effort Joyce had to make merely to seem at ease, I remember that it really horrified me. Joining us at table my cousin made her excuses both for her lateness and for her dress. She said she had lost her watch and hadn't had time to do more after her walk than comb her hair and tidy up. Part at least of what she said was evidently true because with her fine natural complexion she never normally rouged and hardly ever used powder. Tonight powder was only too conspicuously dabbed on a face usually strikingly

Summer's Lease

serene but now showing the obvious ravages Joyce had tried to hide. In her voice also, I could hear, beneath the commonplace words she was using, such choked-back sobs and unuttered cries as wrung my heart.

After the meal we adjourned as usual to the verandah. Joyce and I handed round the coffee, then she sat down within the pinkish circle of the lamplight opposite aunt Lucy. Our guests left early and, using her tiredness as an excuse, Joyce went upstairs soon afterwards. I quickly followed her.

Uncle Henry kissed Joyce goodnight at the foot of the stairs, and I saw her stiffen under his look of pity.



Next morning Philippe didn't turn up. I heard all the footsteps that crossed the bridge and every creak of the gate, and my cousin's light-coloured dress was never out of my sight as I gazed down through the branches of the tulip tree. In the afternoon I walked through the garden, meaning to go as far as the railings. I thought perhaps Joyce might be there, but while still some distance away I saw her leaning on the parapet of the wooden bridge near the foot of the garden. I turned towards her. She didn't look up when she heard me coming and I leant over the bridge beside her without speaking. There was a long pause.

The Jozelle was muddy there. Its lazy waters clotted with a dirty froth the dead leaves and twigs that floated on it, then passed beneath the bridge and flowed into the distance to irrigate the meadows. How unlike it seemed to the clear bubbling stream beside the oak-grove and how little Joyce's pallor, hollow cheeks and unsmiling mouth recalled the happy confident face turned to me when she lay asleep on the moss.

I dared not interrupt my cousin's silence, for on that too there seemed to float wrecks of things once vital but now dead. The questions I longed to ask were, "Has Philippe really gone? Do you know where he is?" The words were never spoken, but I heard Joyce murmur under her breath, "What a betrayal, to go before I'd explained." I knew she was not speaking to me and I hardly understood what her words meant. All I understood was the despair,

the profound bitterness with which she said them. They seemed to express the working of some blind and cruel fate like the descent of a stone thrown into the air without conscious aim plunging down to break the surface of the water and disappear without trace.

I looked up at Joyce. She was still staring straight before her.

Destiny had destroyed her happiness, her peace. It had left her only an unquenchable love, a life like the muddy surface of the water after the stone has slashed through it.

I looked at my cousin so long, so intently, that she turned round. I saw red, sunken eyes which, though she tried to smile, had tears in them.

Words were forced from me without my meaning to speak them. "Has Philippe made you unhappy?" This time Joyce really smiled. Putting her arms round me, she pulled me towards her and it was with my forehead touching her cheek that I whispered,

"I can't bear you not to be happy."

She talked to me then of how bad times pass like the rest, of how one must be patient. Patient, humble and long-suffering, she said, and I can still feel the fear and horror her words aroused in me. It seemed that spoken so sadly they branded themselves as lies.

I asked,

"Is Philippe happy?"

Joyce hesitated momentarily, her smile expressing nothing now but a profound melancholy as she stared blindly into the distance. Then she answered—and I can remember her exact words, "There are people, Maddie, who are not made for happiness. If they find it, they destroy it. It isn't their fault. Philippe is one of them."

I looked at her, thinking of Philippe saying in his room at La Fougeraie, "This is my place." He had shown it to me only because we were caught in the rain, and we had never gone back. It had seemed to me then a perfect place in which to live for ever; now I saw the loneliness of its perfection. Even its flowers had been Philippe's—and they were not picked in the woods and fields, where Joyce would have picked them, but in the border beneath its window.

Joyce and I had brought Philippe flowers for which there was no place and could never be a place, and with his departure those which he had picked were dead. No living person, I realised, could ever enter Philippe's room again.

Mad as Birds

BY LALAGE PULVERTAFT

THERE were two strange years during which I ran wild in the hills of Western Scotland. When they began, I was a child; when they ended, childhood was over. It is only now that I can bear to feel back to the world I lost then; there was so much of mystery and terror in it as well as beauty that I tried to forget, even while I wished to remember. Yet I do not pity the child I was then, set free to live alone in a world without roads or human kind. Rather I pity all those children I see around me today, shut for their few miraculous years in the stone fortress of the city, to whom nothing of the wildness, the otherness, of the real world under the pavements can ever filter.

I used to climb up the steep hillside, through the woods where the oaks clutched their roots round the boulders, up still until the trees fell back defeated, the bracken gave way to moss, the moss to lichen, until at last there was only the bare rock, running clear along the skyline like the crested back of a prehistoric monster. There I would walk, along the earth's backbone, buffeted by gusts of wind that struck like the cuffs of a hand, until I was filled with exaltation and presumption. Poised there, with the elements of creation about me—rock, air, water—I knew the pure hunger of Prometheus for the forbidden fire of the Gods to kindle a new world.

When I came down from the heights, I ceased to be a God and sought to be one with the beasts. They lived as I lived, burrowing from the rain in the undergrowth, stepping carefully over the new-fallen snow, sleeping when the sun fell warm on a hollow of grass; yet they ran from me. Sometimes indeed we would watch one another, the dark eyes in the tree, the white looking upwards, and I would think that we met for a second in a hinterland between reason and instinct before fear whisked us apart. But if they had a

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desire to make contact with me, it was only momentary. With the soft impulse of a wing, the easy ripple of a muscle, they returned home. It was not they, but I who had been cast out. The water was theirs, they moved on it and beneath it; the air was free to them, and their nails dug into a soil of which they were a part. The seasons moved through them; as the tips of the willows burnt red in the spring, so their blood responded; as the sap sank low, and ice barred over the puddles, so sleep came to them and the earth turned.

There was no way in which I could reach them. When I tried to follow them on foot, gravity pulled back my heavy limbs, my heart laboured, until I flung myself down, dizzy with exhaustion, while the leaping brown form flickered on beyond me out of sight. My human brain was no less clumsy. The beasts lived in a world without names, and in seeking for words in which to clothe it, I destroyed it. I could watch the fly turn its triangular head to rub it with the bent hair of its leg like a clumsy washing kitten, but I could not share its feeling. The insinuating body of a ferret would weave past me through the grasses, a moorhen would duck under the water followed by a trail of bright bubbles, a deer would stand poised to run while the breath from its expanding and contracting nostrils froze on the air, but I could not reach the place where they were, I was alone.

If I accepted at last that I was not one of the beasts, I would not yet be a human being. I slipped somewhere in between, a part, in my mind, of the landscape itself. I feared the approach of any human. I used to hide by the roadside until the solitary cyclist had wavered past, fling myself down in the bracken when I heard the crunch under the feet of the man with a gun and a canvas bag, watch high in a tree while the black leaf of a rowing boat crossed the loch below. Above all, I hated to hear a voice. In summer, the sound of the scythe and the laughter of harvesters would wash to the very brink of the woods, and I would put my hand on a tree, stilled and desolate, as if remembering the far-off desecration of the untouched forests as man moved upwards over Europe from the warm Mediterranean.

One winter, the frost was so bitter that it stopped the mountain streams in their tracks, stilled them into an ecstasy of icicles that

Mad as Birds

hung, terrace after terrace, above the black mirrors of the frozen pools. Each dead leaf was encased in transparent ice like a crystallised fruit; each twig lay blackly inside a shining tube. But the streams were more than strange; timeless, without sound, they glittered and shone upwards through the black woods like the high pure note of a violin that drew me after it. I climbed up the course of a stream, my heart in my mouth, aware as I slipped on the icy boulders of the utter quiet now that no water fell in a treble and continuous murmur of comfort.

Suddenly I was seized with a desire to protect this utter beauty for ever from the eyes of men. I took up a stick and struck at the cascades of icicles until they looked like broken teeth, and the ice bounced and rang like metal on the frozen pools. For that second I was horrified, but I could not pause. I went on until I had destroyed them all, and left a trail of ugliness behind me. I did not realise it yet, but I had become human. By acting, I had marked the world I sought to love and protect as surely as did the advancing scythe and axe.

When the spring came again, everything was changed. The steel and black of the woods was lightly hazed in green. The dead leaves under the trees were spotted with the white of wood anemones, the green of dog's-mercury, the gold and purple batons of lords-and-ladies. The streams ran fast and reddish-brown, whipping up puffs of foam where the pools swirled, and above me in the branches the birds turned the mid-air into a market-place of calls and chattering. This was all still my only world, but in a new way.

Now, when I heard the chink and rattle of the plough team in the fields, and saw the warm sweat stand on the face of the ploughman and darken the flanks of the horses, I felt a stab of happiness instead of fear. As I watched the gulls rise in a white skirl of complaint from the furrows, and sink to feed again as the plough passed on, I could feel that man and beast and earth acted in balance, right and a part of one another. I would turn and jump through the woods for the pleasure of feeling my muscles stretch, and bend down to enjoy the coolness of the new leaves on my hot face.

I used this world for my pleasure now, I was no longer a part of it. When the squirrel ran from me, spiralling up the trunk of a tree, and turned at the fork with its tail raised to chatter down incoherent

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rage and defiance, I laughed at it instead of wanting to weep because I could not make it understand. I made and followed my own pathways, I built myself a lodge in my own tree, whereas before I had moved like a shadow, unwilling to alter or possess.

The end came very soon. One day, by chance it seemed, I took a new way down to the freshwater loch. At the foot of the hill, I found myself in an unexpected half-moon of flat grass that stretched between me and the water. Idly, I followed it along the shore. In a moment, I came on a cottage. Something was wrong with it; it was dead. They had taken the roof off, there were no windows or doors, and already the walls were falling, littering the grass with stones as a tree litters the lawn in autumn.

I stepped through the bare space of the threshold into the room that was no room, for grass was pushing up the flagstones, and the grey sky poured in through the terrible hole where there was no roof. In the corner by the blackened fireplace, a tree had sunk its roots through the join in the walls, forcing them apart into brightness beyond. In this dead house, the tree was horribly alive. The wind came through the square of the window and the leaves moved in the room with a stir of sound. The vegetable world had conquered, and I was a human and helpless.

Terror seized me, and I ran, scrambling back up the hillside, the small rocks clattering down behind me, the branches whipping in my face. I did not stop until I had reached the brown ribbon of road that ran between the hills, the same road on which it had been my pride never to set foot during my travels. But now I stood on it, my heart pounding, glad of the cart-tracks, glad of the assurance that this road led to living men who would keep the grass at bay, hold back the encroaching wilderness and mark us out a space in which to live. As I walked up the road I walked, unknowingly, out of childhood, towards the hearth and the garden and the reassurance of the world in which I have lived ever since. Yet I can remember; I can still catch a shiver of fear as the floating seed of willowherb drifts past me and comes to rest in the earth of a bombed site.

We have denied the flicker of recognition that passes between the eye of man and the eye of the beast. We can no longer see the mountains.

of an extensive and beautiful prospect. The Lady who conducts this Establishment is now in London. Further particulars may be had, and the most satisfactory references obtained, by application (if by letter, paid) to A. B., 45, Stamford-street, Blackfriars-road.

EDUCATION.—At Winton, near Brough, in the romantic and very healthy county of Westmorland, a few YOUNG GENTLEMEN are boarded, clothed, furnished with books, and educated either for the professions, commerce, or trade, by the Rev. JOHN ADAMTHWAITE, D.D., a Beneficed Clergyman, aided by proper Ushers, at Twenty-two Guineas a year, and Parlour Boarders at Forty. There are no Midsummer nor Christmas vacations, and learning and religion go hand in hand. Cards of particulars may be had of the Doctor each morning, before his departure for Westmorland, at the Chapter coffeehouse, Paternoster-row, London.

EDUCATION.—At Mr. J. NELSON's Academy, Kirby-hill, near Richmond, Yorkshire, a limited number of YOUTHS are BOARDED, clothed, and instructed in the classics, mathematics, geography, &c. Terms, including every charge for boys under 12 years of age, 20 guineas per annum; from 12 to 14, 22 guineas, &c. French by a native, 10s. 6d. per quarter. No vacations. Pupils dine with the family, and from the limited number received, peculiar facilities are afforded for the acquisition of their studies. Cards, with references, may be had of Mr. Allen, 14, Old-street, St. Luke's; Mr. Colling, 23, Royal-hill, Greenwich; and at the New York coffeehouse, Sweeting's-alley, Royal Exchange; where Mr. Nelson attends from 12 to 2 o'clock daily.

EDUCATION.—At the old established School, Woden Croft Lodge, near Barnard Castle, conducted by Mr. COLONEL SIMPSON and able ASSISTANTS, YOUNG GENTLEMEN are liberally BOARDED, parentally treated, and carefully instructed in the English, Latin, and Greek languages, writing, book-keeping, arithmetic, and all the branches of the mathematics, completely qualifying them for professional pursuits or trade, on the following terms:—Entrance one guinea. From 5 to 9 years old, 20 guineas a year. From 9 to 12 ditto, 25 guineas. The French language, drawing, &c. at a moderate extra charge. At this establishment unwearied attention is paid to forward the general improvement of the scholars, and every inducement practised to excite the emulation that so much tends to beneficial instruction. There are no vacations or extra charge on that account. Mr. Simpson or his agent may be consulted, between the hours of 12 and 2 daily, at the Saracen's Head Inn, Snow-hill; and particulars had at 19, Stockbridge-terrace, Piccadilly; and at Mr. Clarke's, bookseller, Finch-lane, Cornhill.

RUSSELL HOUSE ACADEMY, Streatham, Surrey.—This Establishment is situate on a dry and peculiarly healthy spot, having premises very spacious, and fitted up in a manner

SCHOOL ADVERTISEMENTS

Reproduced from *The Times* of July 17, 1826, by courtesy of the Editor.

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Benevolent Teachers of Youth

BY V. C. CLINTON-BADDELEY

AT eight o'clock on Tuesday, January 30, 1838, Charles Dickens and Hablôt K. Browne left *The Saracen's Head*, Snow Hill, on a winter's expedition to Yorkshire. Dickens had determined upon writing a book which should include scenes from a Yorkshire school, and he and his illustrator wanted to collect first-hand information. That night they put up at Grantham. At eleven o'clock the following night they arrived at Greta Bridge in a 'perfect agony of apprehension' lest they should not find accommodation, but *The George and New Inn* was awake, there were blazing fires, and 'a smoking supper and a bottle of mulled port.'¹ Next morning they drove on to Barnard Castle, four miles distant, on the Durham side of the river Tees, and took rooms at *The King's Head*.

Dickens had 'concerted a pious fraud' with a London solicitor who had given him a letter of introduction to Richard Barnes, an attorney of Barnard Castle, 'telling him how a friend had been left a widow and wanted to place her boys at a Yorkshire school, in hope of thawing the frozen compassion of her relations.' Barnes gave him introductions to one or two schools, but that night 'came down to the inn where I was stopping, and after much hesitation and confusion said with a degree of feeling one would not have given him credit for, that the matter had been upon his mind all day—that they were sad places for mothers to send their orphan boys to—that he hoped I would not give him up as my adviser—but that she had better do anything with them—let them hold horses, run errands—fling them in any way upon the mercy of the world—rather than trust them there.'² But Dickens, naturally, did make use of Barnes's introductions. In particular he called upon McKay, who was then keeping

¹ Letter to Mrs. Dickens, February 1, 1838.

² Letter to Mrs. Hall, December 29, 1838. The account in the preface to *Nicholas Nickleby* is slightly different.

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a small school in Barnard Castle, but had formerly been an usher at Bowes Academy. McKay was a valuable find, for, of all the schools that Dickens wished to investigate, Bowes Academy was top of the list. Fifteen years earlier, conditions at this school had been publicly exposed in lawsuits brought against the master, William Shaw, by the parents of boys who had gone blind from neglected trachoma. Dickens had heard the story (though he had not then confirmed the details in the newspaper files) and probably his first reason for coming to Yorkshire was to enquire about this particular establishment.

There were several schools with tough reputations in the parish of Bowes, four miles from Barnard Castle, but Bowes Academy was much the largest of them. On the Friday morning Dickens and Phiz drove over to Bowes and called upon Shaw. Shaw was suspicious and refused to admit them. But for a few minutes the three men, Shaw, Charles Dickens and Phiz, stood face to face.

Next day the travellers went to York. Four days later they were back in London. Two days, some people have said, was insufficient time to investigate so serious a matter with scrupulous fairness. Dickens would have replied that the subject did not demand fairness. It needed exposure. He had heard enough. 'Depend upon it that the rascalities of those Yorkshire schoolmasters cannot easily be exaggerated, and that I have kept down the strong truth and thrown as much comicality over it as I could, rather than disgust and weary the reader with its fouler aspects.'¹

How much had Dickens discovered during those two days at Barnard Castle, or later, while *Nicholas Nickleby* was in the writing? How far did Dickens truthfully describe the Yorkshire schools in general, and how far could his description fit Bowes Academy in particular? The debate is an old one, but no previous investigation has paid sufficient attention to the public evidence of the school advertisements. Researches in the columns of *The Times* suggest that Dickens's own newspaper investigations went much further than merely turning up the report of the Shaw lawsuit.

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¹ Letter to Mrs. Hall, December 29, 1838.

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EDUCATION,
BY MR. SHAW, & ABLE ASSISTANTS,
At Bowes Academy,
NEAR GRETA BRIDGE, YORKSHIRE.

YOUTH are carefully instructed in the English, Latin, and Greek Languages; Writing, Common and Decimal Arithmetic; Book-keeping, Mensuration, Surveying, Geometry, Geography, and Navigation, with the most useful Branches of the Mathematics; and are provided with Board, Clothes, and every necessary, at TWENTY GUINEAS per Annum each. No extra charges whatever, Doctor's bills excepted. No vacations, except by the Parents' desire.

N.B. The French Language Two Guineas per Annum extra.

Further Particulars may be known on application to Mr. W. LANKSHEAR, Surgeon, Tottenham Court, New Road; Mrs. YOUNG, Plough Yard, Crown Street, Soho; Mr. WALKER, 37, Drury Lane; Mr. TOWNLEY, Chief Office of Excise, Broad Street; Mr. HAMPSON, 52, Long Lane, Smithfield; Mr. GARDINER, 80, Tottenham Court Road; Mr. PITT, 22, Crown Court, Soho; and Mr. WIGGINTON, 42, Museum Street, Bloomsbury.

MR. SEATON, AGENT, 10, FREDERICK PLACE,
Goswell Street Road,

Will give the most respectable References to the Parents of others at the above Seminary, as well as to those who have completed their Education with Mr. SHAW.

A. L. LETTERS MUST BE POST PAID.

Mr. Shaw's prospectus card for Bowes Academy with clothing list on the back. Reproduced by courtesy of the Editor of *The Dickensian*.

*Mr Shaw leaves for Greta
 Road, about 11 1/2 past
 6 o'clock, Thursday Morning*

20 July

EACH BOY IS REQUIRED TO BRING

- Two Suits of Clothes,
- Six Shirts,
- Six Pair of Stockings,
- Four Night Caps,
- Four Pocket Handkerchiefs,
- Two Pair of Shoes,
- Two Hats, or One Hat and Cap.

Mr. SHAW attends at the George and Blue Bear,
 High Holborn, the three first weeks in
 the months of January and July.

Two each pays 3

'EDUCATION. At Mr. Wackford Squeers's Academy, Dotheboys Hall, at the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire, Youth are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket-money, provided with all necessities, instructed in all languages living and dead, mathematics, orthography, geometry, astronomy, trigonometry, the use of the globes, algebra, single-stick (if required), writing, arithmetic, fortification and every other branch of classical literature. Terms, twenty guineas per annum. No extras, no vacations, and diet unparalleled. Mr. Squeers is in town, and attends daily, from one to four, at *The Saracen's Head*, Snow Hill. N.B. An able assistant wanted. Annual salary £5. A Master of Arts would be preferred.'

It has generally been accepted that the Squeers advertisement is a burlesque copy of the prospectus which, in slightly different forms, had long been inserted in the newspapers by William Shaw of Bowes Academy, Greta Bridge. Dickens could have read the advertisement in *The Times*, but the probability is that he studied it on Shaw's business card, which he could easily have obtained at Barnard Castle, or from one of Shaw's references in London. It is certain that Dickens knew this card because the clothes list is printed on the back of it, and is almost identical with the one recited by Squeers to Mr. Snawley at *The Saracen's Head*. But he never actually inspected Bowes Academy, and there are many points in the Squeers advertisement which were not derived from Shaw's prospectus. Plainly Dickens had other sources of information. The first was the gossip which he had collected during his brief visit to Yorkshire. The second was the advertisement columns of *The Times*. Dickens noted in his diary the necessity of looking at the reports of the lawsuit of 1823. That he did do so is obvious from various details in the description of Dotheboys Hall. It is equally certain that his curiosity led him back to the previous July, the great month for school advertisements. A further inspection of advertisements from other years makes it quite plain that the Squeers prospectus was not founded on the language of Shaw alone. Many Yorkshire schoolmasters contributed something to that remarkable appeal to parents and guardians. There are editorial notes to be made on every line of it.

Nearly all the advertisements began with the word 'Education'

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in block capitals. Many schoolmasters proclaimed the beauty and health-giving properties of their neighbourhood and 'delightful' was their favourite adjective. Many schools were near Greta Bridge and nearly all were described as 'academies.' 'Furnished with pocket-money' is a grim joke, but all the advertisements include one inflated sentence about board, books, clothes, and necessities. Nor is Squeers's absurd curriculum much exaggeration of the claims of the schoolmasters to instruct boys 'in every branch of classical, commercial, and mathematical learning.' 'Orthography' and 'astronomy,' for instance, are only a gentle enlargement upon such grand words as 'mensuration', which appear in all these advertisements.

The surprising word 'fortification' is a burlesque of the 'navigation' which a large number of schools included in their advertised curriculum. 'Single-stick' is another Dickensian joke, but '(if required)' has a point of its own. Many of these schools offered to teach French (if required) for an additional fee. It looked well in the advertisements, especially with the assurance that it would be taught by a native of Paris. The charge of two guineas ensured that no-one would call the bluff.

Twenty guineas per annum was the usual fee and 'no extras, no vacations' was the usual slogan. Even 'diet unparalleled' has its origin—'liberally boarded' was the usual claim of the schoolmasters. And the assistant ushers were always described as 'able'—except at Clarkson's school, where the master claimed to be assisted by 'teachers of the first eminence.'

Morality, liberality and parental treatment were the cant claims of nearly all these North Country schoolmasters and it was these that Dickens had in mind when he created Mr. and Mrs. Squeers. "You are leaving your friends, but you will have a father in me, my dear, and a mother in Mrs. Squeers." "They get paternal treatment and washing in." "They are all under the same paternal and affectionate treatment." All this is a satirical interpretation of the 'parentally treated' of Mr. Smith, Mr. Lionel Simpson and Mr. Horn, the 'treatment parental' of Mr. Straffen and 'truly parental' of Mr. R. Simpson and the 'without exception treated the same as Mr. Chapman's own family' of Mr. Chapman.

Mr. Squeers's powerful addiction to morality provides other

parallels. "Every beautiful moral that Mrs. Squeers can instil." "They have come to the right shop for morals, sir." These are champion pieces of humour, but they are also exact reflections of the claims of the real schoolmasters. Mr. Simpson paid 'strict attention to the moral and religious improvement of his pupils', Mr. Boldron the 'strictest attention,' Mr. Straffen the 'utmost attention'; the religious principles of Dr. Adamthwaite's boys were 'strictly guarded,' and to Mr. Nelson the morals, comfort and general mental improvement of his scholars were 'the objects of peculiar solicitude.'

'Liberal' and 'liberally' are words constantly repeated in the advertisements. They are not to be found in Shaw's prospectus, nor does he make any pronouncement upon either morals or parental treatment.

The North Country schoolmasters did not invent their extravagantly worded prospectuses. They basely copied them from fashionable models. In the columns of *The Times* their advertisements lie side by side with the announcements of other schools and for flowery language and generous promises there is not much to choose between them. 'Particular attention,' sometimes 'peculiar and unceasing attention' was consistently promised to the health, morals and comfort of the pupils. At one school religious instruction was imparted 'with sedulous attention,' and 'diet of a superior quality without limitation' was offered at another. In 1823 the Commercial and Classical Academy, Tooting, was offering a course of instruction which embraced 'every branch of knowledge requisite to qualify youth for their future pursuits in life,' and a school at Stoney Stratford, Buckinghamshire, announced a curriculum as inflated as any imagined by the North Country schoolmasters—'. . . The Latin, Greek, French and English languages, elocution, penmanship, arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, mensuration, navigation, algebra, and surveying, with use of chain &c., geography with the use of globes, merchants accompts by single and double entry, drawing and perspective.'

Nor was the dread slogan 'No vacations' confined to the solitudes of the North. *The Times* of July 1823 contains advertisements from a clergyman at Epping and from two London seminaries for young ladies, all of which begin with the words 'No Vacations' in block capitals, as though that were the principal purpose of the

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establishment. Perhaps such southern schools were counterparts of the Yorkshire schools, and received unwanted children whose homes were in the North. There are not many such advertisements in *The Times*, but the schools certainly existed.

It is a difficult matter, and further involved by the fact that, at that period, it was not only the parents of unwanted children who despatched their little ones to boarding school at the earliest opportunity; and not only the crooks and cheats who presided over bad schools. In 1823—the year of the Shaw lawsuit—the Reverend Carus Wilson opened a school at Cowan Bridge for the daughters of poor clergymen. The fees (apart from clothes and extras) were only £14 a year plus £1 entry—the rest of the necessary funds being derived from subscriptions. Intentions were excellent, but the rule was severe, the house was damp, the cooking (at least for the first two years) abominable, and in 1825 many of the girls were ill with typhus. It was to this place that in 1824 the Reverend Patrick Brontë sent four of his motherless daughters, the eldest only ten and a half years old, the youngest less than five; and from this place, a year later, he took the two eldest home to die of tuberculosis. If Charlotte Brontë's picture of Lowood in *Jane Eyre* is not too prejudiced, Cowan Bridge School—in its pious way—must have been quite as unpleasant as Dotheboys Hall, and not nearly as funny.

When it came to the internal economy of Dotheboys Hall, it is clear that Dickens's principal source of information was the report in *The Times* of *Jones v. Shaw* and *Ockaby v. Shaw*, two cases decided in the Court of Common Pleas before Mr. Justice Park, on October 30 and 31, 1823. William Shaw of Bowes Academy was sued by the parents of boys who had gone blind at school from neglected trachoma. Three hundred pounds damages was awarded against him on each count.

The evidence of William Jones¹ is plainly the origin of several famous passages in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Jones: "The boys all washed in a long trough, like what horses drink out of. The boys had but two towels a day, and the great

¹ *The Times* report is in indirect speech. For the purpose of this study the words have been turned back to direct speech to make a more lively comparison with the direct speech of *Nickleby*.

boys used to take advantage of the little boys and get the dry part of the towel."

Compare Squeers to Nicholas : " I don't know, I am sure, whose towel to put you on ; but if you'll make shift with something to-morrow morning, Mrs. Squeers will arrange that in the course of the day." The sense of scuffle, too, is conveyed by Mrs. Squeers's warning to " take care, young man, and get first wash. The teacher ought always to have it ; but they get the better of him if they can."

Jones : " We had hay and straw beds, and one sheet and one quilt to each bed. Four or five boys slept in a bed, not very large. My brother and three more slept in my bed . . . There were only three or four boys in some of the beds."

Nicholas slept on ' a small straw mattress ' on the night that he arrived ; and the numbers are exactly reflected in the conversation of Mr. and Mrs. Squeers. " " Let me see ! Who sleeps in Brooks's bed, my dear ? " " In Brooks's," said Mrs. Squeers, pondering. " There's Jennings, little Bolder, Graymarsh, and what's his name." " So there is," rejoined Squeers. " Yes, Brooks is full."

Boys sleeping only two in a bed would have aroused small comment at this period. In the late eighteenth century, at as worthy a school as Sherborne, ' single bed ' was recorded on the bills as an extra.

Jones : " There was no soap, except on Saturday when the wenches washed us—and that was always used by the great boys, and we had no soap but what we bought."

There was not much soap at Dotheboys Hall, either. " " You'll always find a little bit of soap in the kitchen window : that belongs to you," said Squeers to Nicholas."

Jones : " I felt a weakness in my eyes and could not write my copy. Mr. Shaw said that he would beat me. On the next day I could not see at all, and I told Mr. Shaw, who sent me, with three others to the wash-house. There were others there too, some quite blind."

Mrs. Squeers also believed that illness could be cured by beating. " That young Pitcher's had a fever," she remarked to Squeers. " I

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say it's obstinacy, and nothing shall ever convince me that it isn't. I'd beat it out of him ; and I told you that six months ago." Although only two parents sued Shaw, there were, according to the evidence, about twenty boys who became either totally or partially blind at Bowes Academy. Probably some of these were illegitimate or orphans—children with nobody to stand up for them.

Besides these exact parallels Jones *v.* Shaw contains other evidence which influenced the novelist in a general way. The food at Dotheboys was not much worse than that at Bowes Academy : " Meat and potatoes four times a week ; bread and milk on Thursday ; dumplings made of flour and water on Friday, and black potatoes with a bit of butter on Saturday." On Sunday afternoons they had " the skimmings of the pot. The usher offered us a penny for every maggot, and the boys found more than a quart full, but he did not give them the money."

William Jones said that tea at Bowes Academy consisted of brown bread and a drop of milk and a drop of water. One is reminded at once of " Ah ! Here's richness !"—Squeers's words as he tasted the twopenn'orth of milk and lukewarm water with which he regaled the boys at *The Saracen's Head* before starting on the long cold drive to Yorkshire.

Dotheboys Hall is described as filthy. The boys of Bowes Academy suffered from the itch and the dormitories were infested with fleas. Every other day the boys had to catch fleas in quills, which were afterwards thrown on the fire. " We caught a good beating if we did not fill the quills with fleas," said William Jones.

If any visitors came to Bowes Academy, Shaw used to go to the schoolroom and tell the usher to make all the boys who were without jacket or trousers get under the table. " We were sometimes without our trousers for four or five days while they were being mended." This curious detail might seem exaggerated in fiction and Dickens did not use it, but he did make repeated reference to the out-at-knees-and-elbows condition of the scholars of Dotheboys Hall.

No excuses can be made for Shaw but, if justice is to be done, certain facts must be admitted. Bowes Academy was the largest of the Yorkshire schools : according to the evidence there were between 260 and 300 boys, and as many as seven ushers. The school cannot

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have been such a repulsive prison as Dotheboys Hall in spite of its horrors. Dickens undoubtedly had Shaw in mind as the model for Squeers. He sought him out, he borrowed a great part of the details of Dotheboys Hall from his card and from the report of the lawsuit. He wrote about Shaw in his diary and in his private correspondence and in *Nicholas Nickleby* he even made a passing reference to Squeers being sued by an indignant parent. But he also denied, in the preface of the book, that Squeers was the portrait of any one man. It was discreet to say so—but it was also true. Dickens had not seen enough of Shaw for the portrait to be wholly his.

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The most powerful first-hand indictment of the Yorkshire schools was written by one James Abernethy, who was sent in 1829 to Cotherstone, another school in the Barnard Castle neighbourhood.

‘My father had long been speaking of putting me and my brother to a boarding school, and being taken with Mr. Smith’s advertisement in a newspaper in which he described himself as “a benevolent teacher of youth,” called upon him at the Belle Sauvage Inn, Ludgate Hill, whither he used to repair periodically, for the purpose of securing new pupils, and was then staying on one of these ventures. Not finding him at home he left his card, and on the following day this worthy gentleman entered our house, demonstrated . . . with great warmth the excellency of his system, called his scholars “his dear children,” and, in fact, so won the respect of my unsuspecting parents that my father thought him a happy man, and my mother regarded him as a saint. I was to learn “good breeding” and he engaged to teach me the classics, mathematics, etc., with board and lodging also, all for the moderate sum of £20 per annum. . . .

‘To this fellow’s care my brother George and myself were entrusted, and we made our voyage with him in a brig bound to Stockton-on-Tees, which occupied several days. . . . Mrs. Smith, tender-hearted creature! had driven all the way from the academy (or prison) a distance of thirty-six miles, to meet her beloved husband, and was waiting for us at the inn on arrival, but being, as I said before, a tender-hearted creature, and being moreover afraid that the joy of meeting her husband might prove too much for her weak nerves, she had

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fortified her courage with a good bolus of brandy, so that when we met her she was in high spirits, and received us with a cackling noise and much glee. Smith, in his turn, refreshed himself and prepared to depart. It was already dark, and I remember the wind howled fearfully . . . but the horse was perfectly acquainted with the road—I say the horse, because my master was so drunk that he could scarcely keep his seat. . . .’

Smith’s school accommodated about fifty boys. ‘The building had formerly been a nunnery, and was built in the form of a square, with a courtyard in the centre, into which all the windows looked, the exterior presenting dead walls. There were two gates at opposite sides of the square, which were locked every night at eight o’clock, thus debarring all exit. On one side of the square was a play-ground, out of which we were not allowed to go more than once or twice a month, and into which we were turned on the morning after our arrival. Never shall I forget the heart sinking I felt at the sight of the crowd of unhealthy young ragamuffins, with their hardened faces, who surrounded us and treated us to jeers and laughter. . . . Our clothes were taken from us, only to be returned on occasional Sundays when we attended church at the neighbouring village . . . and others of a workhouse quality substituted, while our shoes were replaced by wooden clogs. Our bedrooms, three in number, were little better than granaries. In each room were fourteen or fifteen wooden beds with straw mattresses, and each with a couple of blankets. Our dining-room was a large gloomy apartment with an earthen floor, the only articles of furniture being long wooden benches, at which we stood and ate our miserable rations—yes, stood, for we had not even chairs.¹ The schoolroom was a lofty chamber which I suppose had been the chapel. It had one small stove and our suffering from cold in the winter was horrible. There were several large holes in the roof which let in water in rainy weather. We had two ruffians, who were styled teachers, beside our master, who seldom, or never entered the schoolroom but to assist at punishing the boys, which seemed to give him a hellish delight. . . . We rose at five, and at

¹ According to an ex-scholar of Bowes Hall, one Johnson who was interviewed in 1889 by *The Bury and Norwich Post*, there were no seats in the dining-room at Clarkson’s establishment. See also p. 379.

eight were assembled in the dining chamber to breakfast. This consisted of black bread, milk and water. . . . School commenced at nine. At one we assembled to dine . . . milk and bread, then soup, a small tureen of it among twelve boys, with about an ounce of meat to each often in a putrid state. None of the teachers dined with us, they merely superintended the distribution of our often disgusting rations like huntsmen feeding a kennel of hounds. . . . At five we supped off black bread and milk, played till seven, and were then sent off to bed. . . .

'No holidays were allowed, and fond parents as a consolation used to send from time to time hampers containing . . . biscuits and sweetmeats, which upon delivery were forthwith appropriated by the stronger young ruffians in the school. . . .'

After two years of this life the surprise visit of an uncle obtained the release of the Abernethy boys. In 1834, four years before the beginning of *Nicholas Nickleby*, James Abernethy set his experiences down on paper, and there they remained, unpublished, until his son incorporated them in his father's biography, published in 1897. The picture of Dotheboys Hall is a perfect copy of Cotherstone in the days of John Smith, but Dickens certainly did not get his information from Abernethy. The inference is clear. There must have been plenty of other evidence to be got for the asking in 1838. Cotherstone is only four miles from Barnard Castle. We cannot doubt that John Smith had left a sizzling reputation behind him.

Dickens went to Yorkshire to collect material and it is not likely that an experienced journalist came back without it. Even on the way up he had the luck to fall in with a schoolmaster's wife who was returning from her half-yearly trip to London. She showed him a letter she was 'carrying to one of the boys from his father, containing a severe lecture (enforced and aided by many texts from Scripture) on his refusing to eat boiled meat. She was very communicative, drank a great deal of brandy and water, and towards evening became insensible, in which state we left her.'¹

Both of these details were remembered. Squeers 'got down at almost every stage—to stretch his legs as he said—and as he always came back from such excursions with a very red nose, and composed

¹ Letter to Mrs. Dickens, February 1, 1838.

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himself to sleep directly, there is reason to suppose that he derived great benefit from the process.'

The letter was the foundation of the letter-reading scene at Dotheboys Hall, and in particular of the letter to the unhappy Mobbs. "Mobbs's mother-in-law," said Squeers, "took to her bed on hearing that he wouldn't eat fat, and has been very ill ever since. She wishes to know, by an early post, where he expects to go, if he quarrels with his vittles . . ."

Then there were the boys who had died at school. Dickens must have been told about them, or why should he have gone into the snow-covered churchyard at Bowes to look at the grave of George Ashton Taylor, who died 'suddenly' at Bowes Academy in 1822. 'The first gravestone I stumbled on that dreary winter afternoon was placed above the grave of a boy, eighteen long years old, who had died—suddenly—the inscription said; I suppose his heart broke—the camel falls down suddenly when they heap the last load upon his back—died at that wretched place. I think his ghost put Smike into my head, upon the spot.'¹

What Dickens did not know was how many tragedies there had been. Comparatively recently the late T. P. Cooper went through the burial registers at Bowes Church and discovered that between October 10, 1810, and March 30, 1834, twenty-nine boys had died at Bowes, eleven at Shaw's, eight at Adamthwaite's, seven at Horn's, three at Clarkson's: with George Taylor (not mentioned in Mr. Cooper's list) thirty deaths in less than twenty-five years.² And that was only in the parish of Bowes; the death roll of Cotherstone and Wodencroft Lodge, and of all the other schools, has still to be investigated.

Dickens would have heard on the spot about the rules for letter writing. Quarterly letters written by one of Shaw's boys, and now preserved in the Dickens House, bear every sign of dictation. Shaw, clearly, was an adherent of the Squeers formula for letter writing—'None, except a circular at Christmas to say they were never so happy and hope they may never be sent for.'

¹ Letter to Mrs. Hall, December 29, 1838.

² See *The Dickensian*, Spring, 1939.

V. C. Clinton-Baddeley

Bowes, August 15, 1818.

Dear Mother,

I am sensible of the many obligations I am under to my dear Uncle and beg you to convey my acknowledgements to him in the best manner you can. His favours I will endeavour to deserve. To you I also return my thanks for the present you sent me by my good Master ; and in the hopes that you and my kind Uncle are well and happy, I am

affectionately

Dear Mother,

Your dutiful Son

John C. Dobson.¹

John C. Dobson died at school aged nine. The bill for his tombstone is preserved with the letters.

The most distinguished old boy of the Yorkshire schools was Richard Cobden. Obligated to accept the charity of relations in the education of a numerous family, Mr. Cobden allowed his son to be sent from a Sussex home to a Yorkshire school, where he remained from his tenth to his fifteenth year without holidays, and without seeing parent or friend. A quarterly letter from Cobden, dated March 25, 1817, is an even more blatant example of a dictated letter.²

Honoured Parents—You can not tell what rapture I feel at my once more having the pleasure of addressing my Parents, and though the distance is so great, yet I have an opportunity of conveying it to you free of expense. It is now turned three years since our separation took place, and I assure you I look back with more pleasure to that period than to any other part of my life which was spent to no effectual purpose, and I beg to return you my most sincere thanks as being the means of my gaining such a sense of learning as will enable me to gain a genteel livelihood whenever I am called into the world to do for myself.

It is improbable that Dickens saw this letter, but it is abundantly

¹ Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Dickens House.

² See *Life of Richard Cobden*, by John Morley, 1881, vol. 1, p. 4.

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plain that he had had precisely similar information from some other source. No great writer of fiction invents his groundwork.¹

A curious evidence, second hand but well attested, is buried in *The Methodist Recorder*, May 22, 1919. There Rosa E. Gladding reported an interview with Mr. Thomas Cooke, whose father, Mr. Bold Cooke, had been sent to Edward Simpson's school, Wodencroft Lodge, in 1804, at the age of six.

'The whole system of teaching was brutal and ridiculous. The scholars received their "education" by a method which gave the least trouble to the masters; it consisted in their having to commit to memory long "tasks," as they were called. If a boy failed to get the required length of words into his head, he was thrashed on his bare flesh to such an extent that, as my father remarked, if you got a thrashing on a cold day you were warm for all the day afterwards.

'Wednesday was a half-holiday; woe to the defaulting scholar then, for he was kept in the school room, standing on one leg for the whole of the afternoon. Should he attempt to put his foot down, the master on the watch threw a ruler at his head, which the boy had to pick up and carry to him, therewith receiving a dozen cuts on the hand as additional punishment.'

There was a Smike at Wodencroft Lodge, who ran away and was captured. Cooke witnessed his punishment, tied naked to a door and flogged in front of the boys of one dormitory, and then dragged to another and flogged again for the benefit of the inmates of that room. Later on, when this real life Smike was at home, he formed a plan to revenge himself on one of the Simpsons, who was canvassing the district for scholars. Informed of his danger, Mr. Simpson hastily

¹ The dictated letter was not found only in the worst schools, and not only in the early part of the nineteenth century. Master J. C. Potter, aged eleven, pupil of Westow Hall, East Yorkshire, was addressing his mother in the following remarkable terms in 1871; 'Dear Mother, A short time has gone for ever since I last addressed you, but to me, I can faithfully assure you, it has been a period of momentous importance, and I sincerely hope of real and lasting advantage. No human power can arrest the fleeting moments. . . .' And so on.

withdrew. It is not improbable that this was one of the stories that Dickens heard at Barnard Castle. Wodencroft Lodge was near Cotherstone. If the story of the runaway scholar was still being told in 1919, it must have been much better known in 1838.

The rest of Cooke's story fits in, point by point, with the evidence of William Jones and James Abernethy. The boys slept three, four and five in a bed. There were no fires. The food was insufficient. There was economy even in the making of the Wodencroft bread: 'The dough being mixed and left ready in the long trough, six of the biggest boys were told to take off their shoes and stockings, roll up their trousers and jump in. Holding on to a pole stretched above the trough, they did the requisite kneading with their feet.' There was no soap or towels at the school. The boys went to a nearby well to wash, 'and for soap they used a sort of marl or clay which surrounded the well; they dried themselves on their own garments.' There was only one precaution against illness—brimstone and treacle.

At Wodencroft Lodge, in the days of Edward Simpson, all the boys were put to clearing the land, digging, spreading manure, sowing seed, making hay and gathering the crops. A large farm was attached to Bowes Academy, too. Dickens would certainly have heard of the farm work. No great point is made of it, but Squeers's first enquiry on returning home was "How's the cows?" and the next "How's the pigs?"

'It has afforded the Author great amusement and satisfaction,' wrote Dickens in the preface to *Nicholas Nickleby*, 'to learn, from country friends and from a variety of ludicrous statements concerning himself in provincial newspapers, that more than one Yorkshire schoolmaster lays claim to being the original of Mr. Squeers. One worthy, he has reason to believe, has actually consulted authorities learned in the law, as to his having good grounds on which to rest an action for libel. . . .'

One of the schoolmasters who considered a libel action was Clarkson, late of Bowes Hall, and, at the time of the publication of *Nicholas Nickleby*, recently removed to Yarm. A particular interest, therefore, is attached to a pamphlet called *Old Yorkshire Schools*, published in

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1884, over the initials J. B. (John Cross Brooks was the author's name), pupil at Bowes Hall in 1822-3.

Written sixty years after the events it records, the pamphlet would not normally be considered the best kind of evidence: but it is a curiously convincing piece of writing, free from gossip, exact in unexpected detail, and valuable because recorded without a word of bitterness.

Breakfast at Bowes Hall consisted of milk and rye bread. The bread was brown and sour, and the milk sometimes so acrid that he could not swallow it and had to go down to the brook for a drink of water. 'The dinner was very often salted beef that had been hung for some time. Each boy's portion was put into a separate plate, and it was useless for anyone to ask for more. The meat was often rusty and unpalatable, and sometimes there was as much fat as lean. . . . We used to make an addition to the ordinary meals by gathering the young rooks which, in the high winds in April, were blown out of their nests.' These were split open and cooked on the pipe of the school-room stove. 'When they dropped down they were turned and stuck on again on the other side, and when they fell off the second time they were considered to be cooked and were then eaten. I have often wondered since how it was possible that such garbage could be esteemed a luxury; but growing boys can put up with queer food. . . '

J. B.'s evidence on the teaching at Bowes Hall is particularly valuable:

'The books and stationery formed a prominent feature in the school advertisement. These, of course, were really provided, but the books were marvels for dirt and dogs' ears, and the writing and ciphering books were mere sheets of common paper stitched together, with coarse brown paper covers, all in the most primitive and most economical manner possible. The slates, too, were mostly without frames, and slate pencils were always at a premium. . . .

'Lindley Murray's abridgement of the English grammar was then considered to be the best for reading and writing the English language correctly, and this was what we had to learn. What was required of us was to learn every word, and what we really did was to understand nothing that we learned. There was no word of explanation given, and sentences that were acquired with much trouble soon

passed away from the memory, because no pains had been taken to put them in a practical form.'

J. B. then quotes two flowery letters written by him to his parents. Pausing loyally to point out that 'the vulgar and offensive ignorance that is described in Mr. Squeers, had no existence whatever in these Bowes schools,' he goes on to admit that the letters were dictated. 'I was beholden to the teacher for the whole of it, and those parts that related to my comfort and happiness were not mine, neither in word or thought.'

Next he describes the washing arrangements. 'It was the custom on Saturday nights for two servants to come in to the school-room with tubs and hot water; each servant had two towels and a piece of soap, and these four towels had to dry every lad after he had been washed. One was for taking off the wet and the second was for drying; but in a short time they became so saturated that every now and then they had to be wrung to be of any use at all. It was only on Saturday nights that soap was used; on one other evening in the week the tubs were brought in and the lads washed themselves, and as a substitute for soap a little oatmeal was put in the water.'

The boys slept in large, airy attics, unceiled, and the ventilation increased by the number of broken panes of glass. 'Many a time there was a long streak of dry snow that went fully half way along the bed room. We were not allowed sheets to sleep on, and blankets became a harbour for fleas to nest in. New boys suffered much from these pests, but after a while they became like the old ones and were very little inconvenienced by their attacks.'

School holidays at Bowes Hall were few, and were usually 'mixed up with the work that lads could do,' such as picking up stones on the surface of the fields and piling them in heaps—the usual farm labouring. But John Cross Brooks harboured no grievances. He simply reports and endeavours to look backwards with an indulgent glance. Even after describing that food and those sleeping conditions, he says that the boys ate well and slept well; and his criticism of Mrs. Clarkson (who was clearly a deplorable housekeeper) amounts to a defence. 'No woman could be less like Mrs. Squeers than she was. I remember her a fair-faced, bright-coloured woman, rather short, and with a pleasant voice. She was very kind-hearted, but the

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work in such an establishment was beyond her powers, and very much was left to chance for the details to go on right.'

Clarkson is not mentioned in the pamphlet, but J. B. refers to him three years later, in *The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*,¹ and once again the ex-scholar of Bowes Hall strives to be fair. 'The brutal and unfeeling conduct that Squeers is described to have shown to the pupils is not only over-drawn, but it never had any existence whatever. . . . During the twelve months I was there, Mr. Clarkson never once struck nor said an unkind word to me.' After which he goes on to describe the behaviour of an usher called Alderson who 'used the cane in a brutal fashion'—so brutal that when J. B. paid a visit to relations in Newcastle, and 'on the first Saturday night washing, the scars and unhealed wounds were discovered by a servant,' an enquiry followed and the boy was removed from the school.

The atmosphere of defence which pervades both pamphlet and article is most interesting. Evidently J. B. had got it into his head (as Clarkson had done before him) that Dotheboys Hall was meant to be an attack upon Bowes Hall. His old school was not as bad as *that*, he declares—and then with charming simplicity describes conditions which were very little better.

The article in *The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* is additionally interesting for one unexpected statement. J. B. says that, after he left Bowes Hall, he went to William Giles's academy in Chatham—Charles Dickens's early school. Dickens sometimes came down to see his old friends, and on two occasions the two boys talked together. J. B. says he told Dickens about his experiences, and he points to that paragraph in the preface to the first cheap edition of *Nicholas Nickleby*, where Dickens says that his first knowledge of the North Country schools had been picked up in his Rochester days.

It is impossible to check the statement fully—but there is nothing essentially improbable about it. We know from a fortunate letter of February 10, 1908, signed Maberly Phillips, that John Cross Brooks was born at Chatham in 1812. There is therefore nothing suspiciously coincidental about his returning there. He was the right age for a schoolboy encounter with Dickens, and Dickens did leave Giles's school shortly before John Cross Brooks could have arrived there.

¹ December 24 and 31, 1886.

Forster certainly conveys the impression that Dickens never returned to Chatham until his later life—but Forster's biography is not infallible. And if Dickens had returned to Chatham for the day, to pay a call on William Giles, he might not have thought the fact worthy of confiding to John Forster.

In 1831 William Giles removed from Chatham to the North Country, and opened a school at Barton Hall, Patricroft, near Manchester. He was an excellent schoolmaster, widely beloved, but it is not unamusing to find that his establishment is described in the prospectus as 'delightfully situated,' and that in it 'right principles, correct habits, and pleasing manners' were 'sedulously cultivated,' while 'the domestic system' was 'liberal, familiar, and affectionate' and the health and comfort of the pupils 'objects of unceasing solicitude.'¹ Evidently the advertisements of all schools, good and bad, were infected by the same jargon.

One further evidence must be recorded about Clarkson. In 1889 *The Bury and Norwich Post* printed an interview with one Johnson, who claimed to be the original of Smike. The interesting point is not the claim—which is absurd—but the fact that the school from which Johnson ran away was Bowes Hall and not Bowes Academy. There was no doubt in Johnson's mind that Squeers was his old schoolmaster, Clarkson.

It was not everybody who had entirely evil memories of his school-days in the North Country. Charles Dibdin, the younger, was sent, at the age of nine in 1777, to a boarding school in the county of Durham, which was afterwards moved to Startforth—in Dibdin's time run by 'the good-tempered old Master Bowman, who had twice flogged me for someone else.'² In those days the fees were only £12 a year.³

Dibdin remained at Startforth for five and a half years 'without returning to London or seeing a single Soul connected with me, Brother Tom excepted,' and here he 'learnt as much of everything as

¹ See Arthur Humphreys, *Charles Dickens and his First Schoolmaster*, 1926, p. 9.

² Dibdin's *Memoirs* have recently been edited by George Speaight for the Society for Theatre Research (1955). The passages quoted here are taken from the still unpublished part of the original manuscript.

³ See an advertisement in *The Norfolk Chronicle*, April 29, 1775, two years earlier, when the school belonged to one Kirkbride.

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they could cram into my head—i.e. Greek, Latin, the Belles Lettres, and every branch of ye Mathematics, which includes everything else.' And he refers to one Gulland, a master, 'who was certainly allowed to be a good Greek and Latin scholar.' He says he 'lived as happily as a little isolated wretch, banished 300 miles from all his connections, with nobody to take his part, could be expected to be.' And though he refers to 'the usual routine of fagging and flogging,' he also writes of acting plays in the open air, and grows lyrical about the woods of 'bonnie Thorsgill.' The boys of Mr. Bowman's Academy were not afraid to climb out at night, sleep in the woods, and come back with a bolster-case full of hazel nuts. They might get flogged for their pleasure, but they did it. It was not the sort of adventure which would have been enjoyed twice at Smith's Academy, or Edward Simpson's, fifty years later.

Even the journey to school was far more agreeable in 1777 than it was in the eighteen-thirties, whether in fiction or fact. At the time of the writing of *Nicholas Nickleby* the boys did the journey to Yorkshire in two days, jammed up six together in a coach. When Charles Dibdin travelled north he was ten days on the road, travelling in an eight-horse waggon—'and never did I travel more pleasantly in my life . . . I could ramble in the fields with my companions . . . looking for bird's nests &c. without any fear of losing the vehicle; then we sang in chorus thro' the villages & towns . . . and I never slept sounder or more sweetly in my life, than I did in the waggon.'

Although it belongs to a period long before *Nicholas Nickleby*, it is worth recording this kinder view of a North Country school, both for its own sake, and because it is a reminder that there must have been things unsaid in favour even of the worst schools. It is a bracing part of England. 'The face of the country is delightful' (as the advertisements used to say) and surely there were others beside Charles Dibdin who got some pleasure from it. The scholars of Wodencroft Lodge probably preferred the farm work to the lessons.

The most easily identifiable of Dickens's sources of information are the newspapers of 1823. For this reason some people have been tempted to think that he was attacking a scandal which had ceased to exist. By 1838 the Yorkshire advertisements in *The Times* were

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certainly fewer, smaller and less flowery. By 1838 many of the worst schoolmasters—Smith, Edward Simpson and Horn—were dead or retired. But Clarkson was still going at Yarm, and Shaw still prospered at Bowes Academy in spite of the publicity and the financial losses of fifteen years earlier. Mr. Justice Park had referred to Shaw's 'unaccountable concealment of the calamity from the parents,' but witnesses had not been lacking on Shaw's side, and the Judge had exonerated him from any general mismanagement. "The attention to the morals, health, comfort, and instruction of the boys was as much as could be expected," he said.

With this kind of judicial support it is not surprising that Bowes Academy continued to flourish, and that the scholars continued to die. On November 24, 1825, a boy named George Brooks was writing quite a happy letter from Bowes, longer, and not at all in the stilted, dictated style of John Dobson's letters. They had had a guy and a bonfire, and sliding on the ice.¹ The laughter was not for long. George Brooks died at school on February 2, 1826. He, too, was nine. Other boys died at Bowes Academy in 1831 and 1834.

The Abernethy boys were rescued from Cotherstone in 1829—only eight years before Dickens's expedition to Yorkshire. There could not have been any great reformation in that short time, or how could Dickens have collected so much local evidence, and why should Richard Barnes have given such an earnest warning against sending any boy to the Yorkshire schools? There were certainly many schools in 1838 doing a roaring trade round about Bowes and Barnard Castle. Their advertisements were more modest than formerly but they were still charging twenty guineas and still proclaimed 'no vacations' as their primary attraction. *Nicholas Nickleby* very nearly put the whole lot out of business. Shaw's advertisement and Straffen's appeared for the last time in 1840, and in that year Mrs. Shaw died. By then Clarkson had drunk himself to death. Shaw had a stroke, and died in 1850.

Of the old familiar *Times* advertisers Simpson of Earby was the only survivor in 1848. Occasionally new names appear. During most of the eighteen-forties one Coates was advertising from Birmingham. And in 1847 and 1848 a Mr. Barber was advertising from Catterick,

¹ See *The Dickensian*, Spring, 1939.

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Straffen's old seat of learning. Barber was a man who cherished the old Yorkshire tradition. 'Education and economy' stood at the head of his manifesto. His fees were from twenty-four guineas, there were no vacations, and among the advantages offered were 'superior penmanship, salubrious situation, polite deportment, unlimited diet, excellent library, and a happy home.'

That particular brand of schoolmaster was fast dying out. But the nineteenth century was tough, and it is disquieting to remember that, even at a respectable school, Master Potter was still writing dictated letters in 1870, still swallowing brimstone and treacle, and still being beaten more than was good for him.

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